



A HISTORY OF  
OUR OWN TIMES  
VOL. II



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# A HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES

FROM THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA  
TO THE DIAMOND JUBILEE, 1897

BY  
JUSTIN MCCARTHY



IN THREE VOLUMES

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# A HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE LITERATURE OF THE REIGN. FIRST SURVEY

THE close of the Crimean War is a great landmark in the reign of Queen Victoria. This, therefore, is a convenient opportunity to cast a glance back upon the literary achievements of a period so markedly divided in political interest from any that went before it. The reign of Queen Victoria is the first in which the constitutional and parliamentary system of government came fairly and completely into recognition. It is also the reign which had the good fortune to witness the great modern development in all that relates to practical invention, and more especially in the application of science to the work of making communication rapid between men. On land and ocean, in air and under the sea, the history of rapid travel and rapid interchange of message coincides with that of the present reign. Such a reign ought to have a distinctive literature. So in truth it has. Of course it is somewhat bold to predict long and distinct renown for contemporaries or contemporary schools. But it may perhaps be assumed without any undue amount of speculative venturesomeness that the age of Queen Victoria will stand out in history as the period of a literature as distinct from others as the age of Elizabeth or Anne, although not perhaps equal in greatness to the latter, and far indeed below the former. At the opening of Queen Victoria's reign a great race of literary men had come to a

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close. It is curious to note how sharply and completely the literature of Victoria separates itself from that of the era whose heroes were Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth. Before Queen Victoria came to the throne, Scott, Byron, Coleridge, and Keats were dead. Wordsworth lived, indeed, for many years after; so did Southey and Moore; and Savage Landor died much later still. But Wordsworth, Southey, Moore, and Landor had completed their literary work before Victoria came to the throne. Not one of them added a cubit or an inch to his intellectual stature from that time; some of them even did work which distinctly proved that their day was done. A new and fresh breath was soon after breathed into literature. Nothing, perhaps, is more remarkable about the better literature of the age of Queen Victoria than its complete severance from the leadership of that which had gone before it, and its evidence of a fresh and genuine inspiration. It is a somewhat curious fact, too, very convenient for the purposes of this history, that the literature of Queen Victoria's time thus far divides itself clearly enough into two parts. The poets, novelists, and historians who were making their fame with the beginning of the reign had done all their best work and made their mark before these later years, and were followed by a new and different school, drawing inspiration from wholly different sources, and challenging comparison as antagonists rather than disciples.

We speak now only of literature. In science the most remarkable developments were reserved for the later years of the reign. We use the words "remarkable developments" in the historical rather than in the scientific sense. It would be hardly possible to overrate the benefits conferred upon science and the world by some of the scientific men who made the best part of their fame in the earlier years of the reign. Some great names at once start to the memory. We think of Brewster, the experimental philosopher, who combined in so extraordinary a degree the strictest severity of scientific argument and form with a freedom of fancy and imagination which lent picturesqueness to all his illustrations and invested his later writings especially with an indefinable charm. We think of Michael

## LITERATURE OF THE REIGN

Faraday, the chemist and electrician, who knew so well how to reconcile the boldest researches into the heights and depths of science with the sincerest spirit of faith and devotion; the memory of whose delightful improvisations on the science he loved to expound must remain for ever with all who had the privilege of hearing the unrivalled lecturer deliver his annual discourses at the Royal Institution. It is not likely that the name of Sir John Herschel, a gifted member of a gifted family, would be forgotten by any one taking even the hastiest glance at the science of our time—a family of whom it may truly be said, in slight alteration of Wordsworth's praise of Milton, that their souls were with the stars and dwelt apart. Richard Owen's is, in another field of knowledge, a great renown. Owen has been called the Cuvier of England and the Newton of natural history, and there cannot be any doubt that his researches and discoveries as an anatomist and palæontologist have marked a distinct era in the development of the study to which he devoted himself. Hugh Miller, the author of the "Old Red Sandstone" and the "Testimony of the Rocks," the devotee and unfortunately the martyr of scientific inquiry, brought a fresh and brilliant literary ability, almost as untutored and spontaneous as that of his immortal countryman, Robert Burns, to bear on the exposition of the studies to which he literally sacrificed his life. If, therefore, we say that the later period of Queen Victoria's reign is more remarkable in science than the former, it is not because we would assert that the men of this later day contributed in richer measure to the development of human knowledge, and especially of practical science, than those of the earlier time. But it was in the later period that the scientific controversies sprang up and the school arose which will be in the historian's sense most closely associated with the epoch. The value of the labours of men like Owen and Faraday and Brewster is often to be appreciated thoroughly by scientific students alone. What they have done is to be recorded in the history of science rather than in the general and popular history of a day. But the school of scientific thought which Darwin founded and in which Huxley and Tyndall taught, is the



subject of a controversy which may be set down as memorable in the history of the world. All science and all common life accepted with gratitude and without contest the contributions made to our knowledge by Faraday and Brewster; but the theories of Darwin divided the scientific world, the religious world, and indeed all society, into two hostile camps, and so became an event in history which the historian can no more pass over than, in telling of the growth of the United States, he could omit any mention of the great Civil War. Even in dealing with the growth of science it is on the story of battles that the attention of the outer world must to the end of time be turned with the keenest interest. This is, one might almost think, a scientific law in itself, with which it would be waste of time to quarrel.

The earlier part of the reign was richer in literary genius than the later has thus far been. Of course the dividing line which we draw is loosely drawn, and may sometimes appear to be capricious. Some of those who won their fame in the earlier part continued active workers, in certain instances steadily adding to their celebrity, through the succeeding years. The figure of Thomas Carlyle is familiar still to all who live in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. It was late in the reign of Victoria that Stuart Mill came out for the first time on a public platform in London after a life divided between official work and the most various reading and study; a life divided too between the seclusion of Blackheath and the more poetic seclusion of Avignon, among the nightingales whose song was afterwards so sweet to his dying ears. He came, strange and shy, into a world which knew him only in his books, and to which the gentle and grave demeanour of the shrinking and worn recluse seemed out of keeping with the fearless brain and heart which his career as a thinker proved him to have. The reign had run for forty years when Harriet Martineau was taken from that beautiful and romantic home in the bosom of the Lake Country to which her celebrity had drawn so many famous visitors for so long a time. The renown of Dickens began with the reign, and his death was sadly premature when he died in his quaint and charming home at Gad's Hill, in the country of Falstaff and Prince Hal, some

thirty-three years after. Mrs. Browning passed away very prematurely; but it might well be contended that the fame, or at least the popularity, of Robert Browning belongs to this later part of the reign even though his greatest work belongs to the earlier. The author of the most brilliant and vivid book of travel known in our modern English, "Eothen," made a sudden renown in the earlier part of the reign, and achieved a new and a different sort of repute as the historian of the Crimean War during the later part. Still, if we take the close of the Crimean War as an event dividing the reign thus far into two parts, we shall find that there does seem a tolerably clear division between the literature of the two periods. We have therefore put in this first part of our history the men and women who had distinctly made their mark in these former years, and who would have been famous if from that time out they had done nothing more. It is with this division borne in mind that we describe the reign as more remarkable in the literature of the earlier and in the science of these later years. It is not rash to say that, although poets, historians and novelists of celebrity came afterwards and may come yet, the literature of our time gave its measure, as the French phrase is, in that earlier period.

Alike in its earlier passages and in its later the reign is rich in historical labours. The names of Grote, Macaulay and Carlyle occur at once to the mind when we survey the former period. Mr. Grote's "History of Greece" is indeed a monumental piece of work. It has all that patience and exhaustive care which principally mark the German historians, and it has an earnestness which is not to be found generally in the representatives of what Carlyle has called the Dryasdust school. Grote threw himself completely into the life and the politics of Athens. It was said of him with some truth that he entered so thoroughly into all the political life of Greece as to become now and then the partisan of this or that public man. His own practical acquaintance with politics was undoubtedly of great service to him. We have all grown somewhat tired of hearing the words of Gibbon quoted in which he tells us that "the discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me

summer. No shade or faint haze of a doubt appeared anywhere. The admirer of Macaulay had all the comfort in his studies that a votary of the Roman Catholic Church may have. He had an infallible guide. He had no need to vex himself with doubt, speculation, or even conjecture. This absolute certainty about everything was, beyond question, one great source of Macaulay's popularity. That resolute conviction which readers of a more intellectual class are especially inclined to distrust has the same charm for the ordinary reader that it has for children, who never care to hear any story if they suppose the narrator does not know all about it in such a way as to render question or contradiction impossible. But although this was one of the causes of Macaulay's popularity, it was not the most substantial cause. The brilliancy of his style, the variety and aptness of his illustrations, and the animated manner in which he contrived to set his ideas of men, places, and events before the reader—these were among the sources of success to which his admirers must look with the greatest satisfaction. It is of late somewhat the fashion to disparage Macaulay. He was a popular idol so long that in the natural course of things it has come to him to have his title to worship, or even to faith, very generally questioned. To be unreasonably admired by one generation is to incur the certainty of being unreasonably disparaged by the next. The tendency of late is to assume that because Macaulay was brilliant he must necessarily be superficial. But Macaulay was not superficial. He was dogmatic; he was full of prejudice; he was in all respects a better advocate than judge; he was wanting in the calm impartial balancing faculty which an historian of the highest class ought to have; but he was not superficial. No man could make out a better and stronger case for any side of a controversy which he was led to espouse. He was not good at drawing or explaining complex characters. He loved indeed to picture contradictory and paradoxical characters. Nothing delighted him more than to throw off an animated description of some great person, who, having been shown in the first instance to possess one set of qualities in extreme prominence, was

then shown to have a set of exactly antagonistic qualities in quite equal prominence. This was not describing a complex character. It was merely embodying a paradox. It was to "solder close," as Timon of Athens says, "impossibilities and make them kiss." There was something too much of trick about this, although it was often done with so much power as to bewilder the better judgment of the calmest reader. But where Macaulay happened to be right in his view of a man or an event, he made his convictions clear with an impressiveness and a brilliancy such as no modern writer has surpassed. The world owes him something for having protested by precept and example against the absurd notion that the "dignity of history" required of historians to be grave, pompous, and dull. He was not a Gibbon, but he wrote with all Gibbon's delight in the picturesqueness of a subject, and Gibbon's resolve to fascinate as well as to instruct his readers. Macaulay's history tries too much to be an historical portrait gallery. The dangers of such a style do not need to be pointed out. They are amply illustrated in Macaulay's sparkling pages. But it is something to know that their splendid qualities are far more conspicuous still than their defects. Perhaps very recent readers of history too may feel disposed to be grateful to Macaulay for having written without any profound philosophical theory to expound. He told history like a story. He warmed up as he went along, and grew enamoured, as a romancist does, of this character and angry with that other. No doubt he frequently thus did harm to the trustworthiness of his narrative where it had to deal with disputed questions, although he probably enhanced the charms of his animated style. But he did not set out with a mission to expound some theory as to a race or a tendency, and therefore pledged beforehand to bend all facts of the physical, the political, and the moral world to the duty of bearing witness for him and proclaiming the truth of his message to mankind.

Macaulay was not exactly what the Germans would call a many-sided man. He never was anything but the one Macaulay in all he did or attempted. But he did a great many things well. Nothing that he ever attempted

was done badly. He was as successful in the composition of a pretty valentine for a little girl as he was in his history, his essays, his "Lays of Ancient Rome," and his parliamentary speeches. In everything he attempted he went very near to that success which true genius achieves. In everything he just fell short of that achievement. But he so nearly attained it that the reader who takes up one of Macaulay's books or speeches for the first time is almost sure to believe, under the influence of the instant impression, that the genuine inspiration is there. Macaulay is understood to have for a long time thought of writing a romance. If he had done so, we may feel sure that many intelligent readers would have believed on the first perusal of it that it was almost on a level with Scott, and only as the first impression gradually faded, and they came to read it over again, have found out that Macaulay was not a Scott in fiction any more than he was a Burke in eloquence or a Gibbon in history. He filled for a long time a larger space in the public mind than any other literary man in England, and his style greatly affected literary men. But his influence did not pierce deeply down into public feeling and thought as that of one or two other men of the same period undoubtedly did, and does still. He did not impress the very soul of English feeling as Mr. Carlyle, for example, has done.

No influence suffused the age from first to last more strongly than that of Thomas Carlyle. England's very way of thinking was at one time profoundly affected by Carlyle. He introduced the English people to the great German authors, very much as Lessing had introduced the Germans to Shakespeare and the old English ballads. Carlyle wrote in a style which was so little like that ordinarily accepted as English, that the best thing to be said for it was that it was not exactly German. At one time it appeared to be so completely moulded on that of Jean Paul Richter, that not a few persons doubted whether the new comer really had any ideas of his own. But Carlyle soon proved that he could think for himself; and he very often proved it by thinking wrong. There was in him a strong, deep vein of the poetic. Long after he

had evidently settled down to be a writer of prose and nothing else, it still seemed to many that his true sphere was poetry. The grim seriousness which he had taken from his Scottish birth and belongings was made hardly less grim by the irony which continually gleamed or scowled through it. Truth and force were the deities of Carlyle's especial worship. "The eternal verities" sat on the top of his Olympus. To act out the truth in life and make others act it out, would require some force more strong, ubiquitous and penetrating than we can well obtain from the slow deliberations of an ordinary Parliament, with its debates and divisions and everlasting formulas. Therefore, to enforce his eternal verities, Carlyle always preached up and yearned for the strong man, the poem in action, whom the world in our day had not found, and perhaps could not appreciate. If this man were found, it would be his duty and his privilege to drill us all as in some vast camp, and compel us to do the right thing to his dictation. It cannot be doubted that this preaching of the divine right of force had a serious and sometimes a very detrimental effect upon the public opinion of England. It degenerated often into affectation, alike with the teacher and the disciples. But the influence of Carlyle in preaching earnestness and truth, in art and letters and everything else, had a healthy and very remarkable effect entirely outside the regions of the moralist, who in this country at least has always taught the same lesson. It is not probable that individual men were made much more truthful in England by Carlyle's glorification of the eternal verities than they would have been without it. But his influence on letters and art was peculiar, and was not evanescent. Carlyle is distinctly the founder of a school of history and a school of art. In the meanwhile we may regard him simply as a great author, and treat his books as literary studies and not as gospels. Thus regarded, we shall find that he writes in a style which every sober critic would feel bound to condemn, but which nevertheless the soberest critic is forced continually, despite of himself and his rules, to admire. For out of the strange jargon which he seems to

have deliberately adopted, Carlyle has undoubtedly constructed a wonderfully expressive medium in which to speak his words of remonstrance and admonition. It is a mannerism, but a mannerism into which a great deal of the individuality of the man seems to have entered. It is not wholly affectation or superficiality. Carlyle's own soul seems to speak out in it more freely and strenuously than it would in the ordinary English of society and literature. No tongue, says Richter, is eloquent save in its own language; and this strange language which he has made for himself does really appear to be the native tongue of Carlyle's powerful and melancholy eloquence. Carlyle is endowed with a marvellous power of depicting stormy scenes and rugged daring natures. At times strange wild piercing notes of the pathetic are heard through his strenuous and fierce bursts of eloquence like the wail of a clarion thrilling between the blasts of a storm. His "History of the French Revolution" is history read by lightning. Of this remarkable book John Stuart Mill supplied the principal material; for Mill at one time thought of writing a history of the Revolution himself, but, giving up the idea, placed the materials he had collected at the service of Carlyle. Carlyle used the materials in his own way. He is indebted to no one for his method of making up his history. With all its defects the book is one of the very finest our age has produced. Its characters stand out like portraits by Rembrandt. Its crowds live and move. The picture of Mirabeau is worthy of the hand of the great German poet who gave us Walenstein. But Carlyle's style has introduced into this country a thoroughly false method of writing history. It is a method which has little regard for the "dry light" which Bacon approved. It works under the varying glare of coloured lights. Its purpose is to express scorn of one set of ideas and men, and admiration of another. Given the man we admire, then all his doings and ways must be admirable; and the historian proceeds to work this principle out. Carlyle's Mirabeau is as truly a creature of romance as the Monte Christo of Dumas. This way of going to work became even more apparent, as the

mannerisms became more incessant, in Carlyle's later writings—in the "Frederick the Great" for example. The reader dares not trust such history. It is of little value as an instructor in the lessons of the times and events it deals with. It only tells us what Carlyle thought of the times and the events, and the men who were the chief actors in them. Nor does Carlyle bequeath many new ideas to the world which he stirred by his stormy eloquence. That falsehood cannot prevail over truth in the end, nor simulacra do the work of realities, is not after all a lesson which earth can be said to have waited for up to the nineteenth century and the coming of Carlyle; and yet it would be hard to point to any other philosophical outcome of Mr. Carlyle's teaching. His value is in his eloquence, his power, his passion, and pathos; his stirring and lifelike pictures of human character, whether faithful to the historical originals or not; and the vein of poetry which runs through all his best writings, and sometimes makes even the least sympathetic reader believe that he has to do with a genuine poet.

In strongest contrast to the influence of Carlyle may be set the influence of Mill. Except where the professed teachers of religious creeds are concerned, there can be found no other man in the reign of Victoria who had anything like the influence over English thought that Mill and Carlyle possessed. Mill was a devoted believer in the possibilities of human nature and of liberty. If Rousseau was the apostle of affliction, Mill was surely the apostle of freedom. He believed that human society might be brought to something not far removed from perfection by the influence of education and of freedom acting on the best impulses and disciplining the emotions of men and women. Mill was a strange blending of political economist and sentimentalist. It was not altogether in humorous exaggeration that somebody said he was Adam Smith and Petrarch in one. The curious seclusion in which he was brought up by his father, the wonderful discipline of study to which in his very infancy he was subjected, would have made something strange and striking out of a commonplace nature; and Mill was in any case a man of genius. There



was an antique simplicity and purity about his life which removed him altogether from the ways of ordinary society. But the defect of his teaching as an ethical guide was that he made too little allowance for the influence of ordinary society. He always seemed to act on the principle that with true education and noble example the most commonplace men could be persuaded to act like heroes, and to act like heroes always. The great service which he rendered to the world in his "Political Economy" and his "System of Logic" is of course independent of his controverted theories and teachings. These works would, if they were all he had written, place him in the very front rank of English thinkers and instructors. But these only represent half of his influence on the public opinion of his time. His faith in the principle of human liberty led him to originate the movement for what is called the emancipation of women. Opinions will doubtless long differ as to the advantages of the movement, but there can be no possible difference of judgment as to the power and fascination of Mill's advocacy and the influence he exercised. He did not succeed in his admirable essay "On Liberty" in establishing the rule or principle by which men may decide between the right of free expression of opinion and the right of authority to ordain silence. Probably no precise boundary line can ever be drawn; and in this, as in so much else, lawmakers and peoples must be content with a compromise. But Mill's is at least a noble plea for the fullest possible liberty of utterance; and he has probably carried the argument as far as it ever can be carried. There never was a more lucid and candid reasoner. The most difficult and abstruse questions became clear by the light of his luminous exposition. Something too of human interest and sympathy became infused into the most seemingly arid discussions of political economy by the virtue of his emotional and half poetic nature. It was well said of him that he reconciled political economy with human feeling. His style was clear as light. Mill, said one of his critics, lives in light. Sometimes his language rose to a noble and dignified eloquence; here and there are passages of a grave, keen

irony. Into the questions of religious belief which arise in connection with his works it is no part of our business to enter ; but it may be remarked that his latest writings seem to show that his views were undergoing much modification in his closing years. His opponents would have allowed as readily as his supporters that no man could have been more sincerely inspired with a desire to arrive at the truth ; and that none could be more resolute to follow the course which his conscience told him to be right. He carried this resolute principle into his warmest controversies, and it was often remarked that he usually began by stating the case of the adversary better than the adversary could have done it for himself. Applying to his own character the same truthful method of inquiry which he applied to others, Mill has given a very accurate description of one at least of the qualities by which he was able to accomplish so much. He tells us in his Autobiography that he had from an early period considered that the most useful part he could take in the domain of thought was that of an interpreter of original thinkers, and mediator between them and the public. "I had always a humble opinion of my own powers as an original thinker, except in abstract science (logic, metaphysics, and the theoretic principles of political economy and politics), but thought myself much superior to most of my contemporaries in willingness and ability to learn from everybody ; as I found hardly any one who made such a point of examining what was said in defence of all opinions, however new or however old, in the conviction that even if they were errors there might be a substratum of truth underneath them, and that in any case the discovery of what it was that made them plausible would be a benefit to truth. This was not assuredly Mill's greatest merit, but it was perhaps his most peculiar quality. He was an original thinker, despite his own sincere disclaimer ; but he founded no new system. He could be trusted to examine and expound any system with the most perfect fairness and candour ; and even where it was least in harmony with his own ideas to do the fullest justice to every one of its claims.

Harriet Martineau's career as a woman of letters and a teacher began indeed before the reign of Queen Victoria, but it was carried on almost without interruption during nearly forty years of the reign. She was political economist, novelist, historian, biographer, and journalist; and in no path did she fail to make her mark. Few women could have turned to the occupations of a political writer under greater physical disadvantages; and no man in this line of life, however well furnished by nature with physical and intellectual qualifications for success, could have done better work. She wrote some exquisite little stories, and one or two novels of more ambitious character. It is praise enough to give them when we say that, although fiction certainly was not work for which she was most especially qualified, yet what she did seems to be destined to live and hold a place in our literature. She was, so far as we know, the only Englishwoman who ever achieved distinct and great success as a writer of leading articles for a daily newspaper. Her strong prejudices and dislikes prevent her from being always regarded as a trustworthy historian. Her "History of the Thirty Years' Peace"—for it may be regarded as wholly hers, although Charles Knight began it—is a work full of vigorous thought and clear description, with here and there passages of genuine eloquence. But it is marred in its effect as a trustworthy narrative by the manner in which the authoress yields here and there to inveterate and wholesale dislikes; and sometimes, though not so often or so markedly, to an overwrought hero-worship. Miss Martineau had to a great extent an essentially masculine mind. She was often reproached with being unfeminine; and assuredly she would have been surprised to hear that there was anything womanish in her way of criticising public events and men. Yet in reading her "History" one is sometimes amused to find that partisanship which is commonly set down as a specially feminine quality affects her estimate of a statesman. Hers is not by any means the Carlylean way of starting with a theory and finding all virtue and glory in the man who seems to embody it, and all baseness and stupidity in his opponents. But when she takes a dislike

to a particular individual, she seems to assume that where he was wrong he must have been wrong of set malign purpose, and that where he chanced to be in the right it was in mistake, and in despite of his own greater inclination to be in the wrong. It is fortunate that these dislikes are not many, and also that they soon show themselves, and therefore cease to be seriously misleading. In all other respects the book well deserves careful study. The life of the woman is a study still more deeply interesting. Others of her sex there were of greater genius, even in her own time ; but no Englishwoman ever followed with such perseverance and success a career of literary and political labour.

"The blue-peter has long been flying at my fore-mast, and now that I am in my ninety-second year, I must soon expect the signal for sailing." In this quaint and cheery way Mary Somerville, many years after the period at which we have now arrived in this work, described her condition and her quiet waiting for death. No one surely could have better earned the right to die by the labours of a long life devoted to the education and improvement of her kind. Mary Somerville has probably no rival among women as a scientific scholar. Her summary of Laplace's "*Mécanique Céleste*," her treatise on the "Connection of the Physical Sciences," and her "Physical Geography," would suffice to place any student, man or woman, in the foremost ranks of scientific expounders. The "Physical Geography" is the only one of Mrs. Somerville's remarkable works which was published in the reign of Queen Victoria ; but the publication of the other two preceded the opening of the reign by so short a time, and her career and her fame so entirely belong to the Victorian period, that, even if the "Physical Geography" had never been published, she must be included in this history. "I was intensely ambitious," Mrs. Somerville says of herself in her earlier days, to "excel in something, for I felt in my own breast that women were capable of taking a higher place in creation than that assigned to them in my early days, which was very low." It is not exaggeration to say that Mrs. Somerville distinctly raised the world's estimate of woman's capacity for the severest and the loftiest scientific pursuits. She possessed

the most extraordinary power of concentration, amounting to an entire absorption in the subject which she happened to be studying, to the exclusion of all disturbing sights and sounds. She had in a supreme degree that which Carlyle calls the first quality of genius, an immense capacity for taking trouble. She had also, happily for herself, an immense capacity for finding enjoyment in almost everything: in new places, people and thoughts; in the old familiar scenes and friends and associations. Hers was a noble, calm, fully-rounded life. She worked as steadfastly and as eagerly in her scientific studies as Harriet Martineau did with her economics and her politics; but she had a more cheery, less sensitive, less eager and impatient nature than Harriet Martineau. She was able to pursue her most intricate calculations after she had passed her ninetieth year; and one of her chief regrets in dying was that she could not "live to see the distance of the earth from the sun determined by the transit of Venus, and the source of the most renowned of rivers, the discovery of which will immortalise the name of Dr. Livingstone."

The paths of the two poets who first sprang into fame in the present reign are strangely remote from each other. Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning are as unlike in style and choice of subject, and indeed in the whole spirit of their poetry, as Wordsworth and Byron. Mr. Tennyson deals with incident and picturesque form, and graceful legend, and with so much of doubt and thought and yearning melancholy as would belong to a refined and cultured intellect under no greater stress or strain than the ordinary chances of life among educated Englishmen might be expected to impose. He has revived with great success the old Arthurian legends and made them a part of the living literature of England. But the knights and ladies whom he paints are refined, graceful, noble, without roughness, without wild or at all events complex and distracting passions. It may perhaps be said that Tennyson has taken for his province all the beauty, all the nobleness, all the feeling that lie near to or on the surface of life and of nature. His object might seem to be that which Lessing declared the true object of all art, "to

delight ;" but it is to delight in a somewhat narrower sense than was the meaning of Lessing. Beauty, melancholy and repose are the elements of Tennyson's poetry. There is no storm, no conflict, no complication. Mr. Browning delights in perplexed problems of character and life ; in studying the effects of strange contrasting forces of passion coming into play under peculiar and distracting conditions. All that lies beneath the surface ; all that is out of the common track of emotion ; all that is possible, that is poetically conceivable, but that the outer air and the daily walks of life never see, this is what specially attracts Mr. Browning. In Tennyson a knight of King Arthur's mythical court has the emotions of a polished English gentleman of our day, and nothing more. Mr. Browning would prefer, in treating of a polished English gentleman of our day, to exhibit him under some conditions which should draw out in him all the strange elementary passions and complications of emotion that lie far down in deeps below the surface of the best-ordered civilisation. The tendency of the one poet is naturally to fall now and then into the sweetly insipid ; of the other to wander away into the tangled regions of the grotesque. It is perhaps only natural that under such conditions the one poet should be profoundly concerned for beauty of form, and the latter almost absolutely indifferent to it. No poet has more finished beauty of style and exquisite charm of melody than Tennyson. None certainly can be more often wanting in grace of form and delight of soft sound than Mr. Browning. There are many passages and even many poems of Browning which show that the poet could be melodious if he would ; but he seems sometimes as if he took a positive delight in perplexing the reader's ear with harsh untuneful sounds. Mr. Browning commonly allows the study of the purely psychological to absorb too much of his moods and of his genius. It has a fascination for him which he is seemingly unable to resist. He makes of his poems too often mere searchings into strange deeps of human character and human error. He seldom abandons himself altogether to the inspiration of the poet ; he hardly ever deserves the definition of the minstrel given in

Goethe's ballad who "sings but as the song-bird sings." Moreover, Mr. Browning has an almost morbid taste for the grotesque; he is not unfrequently a sort of poetic Callot. It has to be added that Mr. Browning is seldom easy to understand, and that there are times when he is only to be understood at the expense of as much thought and study as one might give to a controverted passage in an ancient author. This is a defect of art, and a very serious defect. The more devoted of Mr. Browning's admirers will tell us no doubt that the poet is not bound to supply us with brains as well as poetry, and that if we cannot understand what he says it is the fault simply of our stupidity. But an ordinary man who finds that he can understand Shakespeare and Milton, Dryden and Wordsworth, Byron and Keats without any trouble, may surely be excused if he does not set down his difficulty about some of Browning's poems wholly to the account of his own dulness. It may well be doubted whether there is any idea so subtle that if the poet can actually realise it in his own mind clearly for himself the English language will not be found capable of expressing it with sufficient clearness. The language has been made to do this for the most refined reasonings of philosophical schools, for transcendentalists and utilitarians, for psychologists and metaphysicians. No intelligent person feels any difficulty in understanding what Mill or Herbert Spencer or Huxley means; and it can hardly be said that the ideas Mr. Browning desires to convey to his readers are more difficult of exposition than some of those which the authors we name have contrived to set out with a white light of clearness all around them. The plain truth is that Mr. Browning is a great poet in spite of some of the worst defects that ever stood between a poet and popularity. He is a great poet by virtue of his commanding genius; his fearless imagination, his penetrating pathos. He strikes an iron harpstring. In certain of his moods his poetry is like that of the terrible lyre in the weird old Scottish ballad, the lyre that was made of the murdered maiden's breast-bone, and which told its fearful story in tones "that would melt a heart of stone." In strength

and depth of passion and pathos, in wild humour, in emotion of every kind, Mr. Browning is much superior to Mr. Tennyson. The Poet Laureate is the completer man. Mr. Tennyson is beyond doubt the most complete of the poets of Queen Victoria's time. No one else has the same combination of melody, beauty of description, culture and intellectual power. He has sweetness and strength in exquisite combination. If a just balance of poetic powers were to be the crown of a poet, then undoubtedly Mr. Tennyson must be proclaimed the greatest English poet of our time. The reader's estimate of Browning and Tennyson will probably be decided by his predilection for the higher effort or for the more perfect art. Browning's is surely the higher aim in poetic art; but of the art which he essays Tennyson is by far the completer master. Tennyson has undoubtedly thrown away much of his sweetness and his exquisite grace of form on mere triflings and pretty conceits; and perhaps as a retribution those poems of his which are most familiar in the popular mouth are just those which least do justice to his genuine strength and intellect. The cheap sentiment of "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," the yet cheaper pathos of the "May Queen," are in the minds of thousands the choicest representation of the genius of the poet who wrote "In Memoriam" and the "Morte d'Arthur." Mr. Browning has chosen to court the approval of his time on terms of such disadvantage as an orator might who insisted in addressing an assemblage in some tongue which they but imperfectly understood. It is the fault of Mr. Browning himself if he has for his only audience and admirers men and women of culture, and misses altogether that broad public audience to which most poets have chosen to sing, and which all true poets, one would think, must desire to reach with their song. It is on the other hand assuredly Mr. Tennyson's fault if he has by his too frequent condescension to the drawing-room, and even the young ladies' school, made men and women of culture forget for the moment his best things, and credit him with no higher gift than that of singing "virginibus puerisque." One quality ought to be mentioned as common to these two poets who have so little else in common. They are both



absolutely faithful to nature and truth in their pictures of the earth and its scenes and seasons. Almost all the great poets of the past age, even including Wordsworth himself, were now and then content to generalise nature; to take some things for granted, to use their memory, or the eyes of others, rather than their own eyes, when they had to describe changes on leaf, or sky, or water. It is the characteristic of Tennyson and Browning that they deal with nature in a spirit of the most faithful loyalty. Not the branch of a tree, nor the cry of a bird, nor the shifting colours on sea or sky will be found described on their pages otherwise than as the eye sees for itself at the season of which the poet tells. In reading Tennyson's description of woodland and forest scenes one might almost fancy that he can catch the exact peculiarities of sound in the rustling and moaning of each separate tree. In some of Mr. Browning's pictures of Italian scenery every detail is so perfect that many a one journeying along an Italian road and watching the little mouse-coloured cattle as they drink at the stream, may for the moment almost feel uncertain whether he is looking on a page of living reality or recalling to memory a page from the author of the "Ring and the Book." The poets seem to have returned to the fresh simplicity of a far distant age of poetry, when a man described exactly what he saw and was put to describing it because he saw it. In most of the intermediate times a poet describes because some other poet has described before, and has said that in nature there are such and such beautiful things which every true poet must see, and is bound to acknowledge accordingly in his verse.

These two are the greatest of our poets in the earlier part of the reign; indeed in the reign early or late so far. But there are other poets also of whom we must take account. Mrs. Browning has often been described as the greatest poetess of whom we know anything since Sappho. This description, however, seems to carry with it a much higher degree of praise than it really bears. It has to be remembered that there is no great poetess of whom we know anything from the time of Sappho to that of Mrs. Browning. In England we have hardly had any woman

but Mrs. Browning alone who really deserves to rank with poets. She takes a place altogether different from that of any Mrs. Hemans or such singer of sweet, mild, and innocent note. Mrs. Browning would rank highly among poets without any allowance being claimed for her sex. But estimated in this way, which assuredly she would have chosen for herself, she can hardly be admitted to stand with the foremost even of our modern day. She is one of the most sympathetic of poets. She speaks to the hearts of numbers of readers who think Tennyson all too sweet, smooth and trivial, and Robert Browning harsh and rugged. She speaks especially to the emotional in woman. In all moods when men or women are distracted by the bewildering conditions of life, when they feel themselves alternately dazzled by its possibilities and baffled by its limitations, the poems of Elizabeth Browning ought to find sympathetic ears. But the poems are not the highest which merely appeal to our own moods and echo our own complaints; and there was not much of creative genius in Mrs. Browning. Her poems are often but a prolonged sob; a burst of almost hysterical remonstrance or entreaty. It must be owned, however, that the egotism of emotion has seldom found such exquisite form of outpouring as in her so-called "Sonnets from the Portuguese"; and that what the phraseology of a school would call the emotion of "altruism" has rarely been given forth in tones of such piercing pathos as in the "Cry of the Children."

Mr. Matthew Arnold's reputation was made before this earlier period had closed. He is a maker of such exquisite and thoughtful verse that it is hard sometimes to question his title to be considered a genuine poet. On the other hand, it is likely that the very grace and culture and thoughtfulness of his style inspire in many the first doubt of his claim to the name of poet. Where the art is evident and elaborate, we are all too apt to assume that it is all art and not genius. Mr. Arnold is a sort of miniature Goethe; we do not know that his most ardent admirers could demand a higher praise for him, while it is probable that the description will suggest exactly the intellectual peculiarities which lead so many to deny him a place with the

really inspired singers of his day. Of the three men whom we have named we should be inclined to say that Mr. Arnold made the very most of his powers, and Mr. Browning the very least. Mr. Arnold is a critic as well as a poet: there are many who relish him more in the critic than in the poet. In literary criticism his judgment is refined, and his aims are always high if his range be not very wide; in politics and theology he is somewhat apt to be at once fastidious and fantastic.

The "Song of the Shirt" would give Thomas Hood a technical right, if he had none other, to be classed as a poet of the reign of Queen Victoria. The "Song of the Shirt" was published in *Punch* when the reign was well on; and after it appeared the "Bridge of Sighs"; and no two of Hood's poems have done more to make him famous. He was a genuine, though not a great poet, in whom humour was mostly properly to be defined as Thackeray has defined it—the blending of love and wit. The "Song of the Shirt" and the "Bridge of Sighs" made themselves a kind of monumental place in English sympathies. The "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies" was written several years before. It alone would have made for its author a reputation. The ballad of "Fair Inez" is almost perfect in its way. The name of Sir Henry Taylor must be included with the poets of this reign, although his best work was done before the reign began. In his work, clear strong intelligence prevails more than the emotional and the sensuous. He makes himself a poet by virtue of intellect and artistic judgment; for there really do seem some examples of a poet being made and not born. We can hardly bring Procter among the Victorian poets. Macaulay's ringing verses are rather the splendid and successful *tours de force* of a clever man, than the genuine lyrics of a poet. Arthur Clough was a man of rare promise, whose lamp was extinguished all too soon. Philip James Bailey startled the world by his "Festus," and for a time made people believe that a great new poet was coming; but the impression did not last, and Bailey proved to be little more than the comet of a season. A spasmodic school which sprang

up after the success of "Festus," and which was led by a brilliant young Scotchman, Alexander Smith, passed away in a spasm as it came, and is now almost forgotten. "Orion," an epic poem by Richard H. Horne, made a very distinct mark upon the time. Horne proved himself to be a sort of Landor *manqué*—or perhaps a connecting link between the style of Landor and that of Browning. The earlier part of the reign was rich in singers; but the names and careers of most of them would serve rather to show that the poetic spirit was abroad, and that it sought expression in all manner of forms, than that there were many poets to dispute the place with Tennyson and Browning. It is not necessary here to record a list of mere names. The air was filled with the voices of minor singers. It was pleasant to listen to their piping, and the general effect may well be commended; but it is not necessary that the names of all the performers in an orchestra should be recorded for the supposed gratification of a posterity which assuredly would never stop to read the list.

Thirty-six years have passed away since Mr. Ruskin leaped into the literary arena, with a spring as bold and startling as that of Kean on the Kemble-haunted stage. The little volume, so modest in its appearance and self-sufficient in its tone, which the author defiantly flung down like a gage of battle before the world, was entitled, "Modern Painters: their superiority in the art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters; by a Graduate of Oxford." It was a challenge to established beliefs and prejudices; and the challenge was delivered in the tone of one who felt confident that he could make good his words against any and all opponents. If there was one thing that more than another seemed to have been fixed and rooted in the English mind, it was that Claude and one or two others of the old masters possessed the secret of landscape painting. When, therefore, a bold young dogmatist involved in one common denunciation "Claude, Gaspar Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Ruysdael, Paul Potter, Canaletto, and the various Van-somethings and Koek-somethings, more especially and malignantly those who

have libelled the sea," it was no wonder that affronted authority raised its indignant voice and thundered at him. Affronted authority, however, gained little by its thunder. The young Oxford Graduate possessed, along with genius and profound conviction, an imperturbable and magnificent self-conceit against which the surges of angry criticism dashed themselves in vain. Mr. Ruskin sprang into literary life simply as a vindicator of the fame and genius of Turner. But as he went on with his task he found, or at least he convinced himself, that the vindication of the great landscape painter was essentially a vindication of all true art. Still further proceeding with his self-imposed task, he persuaded himself that the cause of true art was identical with the cause of truth, and that truth, from Ruskin's point of view, enclosed in the same rules and principles all the morals, all the science, industry, and daily business of life. Therefore, from an art critic he became a moralist, a political economist, a philosopher, a statesman, a preacher—anything, everything that human intelligence can impel a man to be. All that he has written since his first appeal to the public has been inspired by this conviction: that an appreciation of the truth in art reveals to him who has it the truth in everything. This belief has been the source of Mr. Ruskin's greatest successes, and of his most complete and ludicrous failures. It has made him the admiration of the world one week and the object of its placid pity or broad laughter the next. A being who could be Joan of Arc to-day and Voltaire's Pucelle to-morrow, would hardly exhibit a stronger psychical paradox than the eccentric genius of Mr. Ruskin sometimes illustrates. But in order to do him justice, and not to regard him as a mere erratic utterer of eloquent contradictions, poured out on the impulse of each moment's new freak of fancy, we must always bear in mind the fundamental faith of the man. Extravagant as this or that doctrine may be, outrageous as to-day's contradiction of yesterday's assertion may sound, yet the whole career is consistent with its essential principles and beliefs. It may be fairly questioned whether Mr. Ruskin has any great qualities but his eloquence and

his true, honest love of nature. As a man to stand up before a society of which one part was fashionably languid and the other part only too busy and greedy, and preach to it of Nature's immortal beauty, and of the true way to do her reverence, Ruskin has and had a position of genuine dignity. This ought to be enough for the work and for the praise of any man. But the restlessness of Ruskin's temperament, combined with the extraordinary self-sufficiency which contributed so much to his success where he was master of a subject, sent him perpetually intruding into fields where he was unfit to labour, and enterprises which he had no capacity to conduct. Seldom has a man contradicted himself so often, so recklessly, and so complacently as Mr. Ruskin. It is venturesome to call him a great critic even in art, for he seldom expresses any opinion one day without flatly contradicting it the next. He is a great writer as Rousseau was—fresh, eloquent, audacious, writing out of the fulness of the present mood, and heedless how far the impulse of to-day may contravene that of yesterday. But as Rousseau was always faithful to his idea of truth, so Ruskin is always faithful to Nature. When all his errors, and paradoxes, and contradictions shall have been utterly forgotten, this will remain to his praise. No man since Wordsworth's brightest days did half so much to teach his countrymen, and those who speak his language, how to appreciate and honour that silent Nature "which never did betray the heart that loved her."

In fiction as well as in poetry there are two great names to be compared or contrasted when we turn to the literature of the earlier part of the reign. In the very year of Queen Victoria's accession appeared the "Pickwick Papers," the work of the author who the year before had published the "Sketches by Boz." The public soon recognised the fact that a new and wonderfully original force had come into literature. The success of Charles Dickens is absolutely unequalled in the history of English fiction. At the season of his highest popularity Sir Walter Scott was not so popular an author. But that happened to Dickens which did not happen to Scott. When Dickens

was at his zenith, and when it might have been thought that any manner of rivalry with him was impossible, a literary man who was no longer young, who had been working with but moderate success for many years in light literature, suddenly took to writing novels, and almost in a moment stepped up to a level with the author of "Pickwick." During the remainder of their careers the two men stood as nearly as possible on the same level. Dickens always remained by far the more popular of the two; but it may be safely said that the opinion of the literary world in general was inclined to favour Thackeray. From the time of the publication of "Vanity Fair" the two were always put side by side for comparison or contrast. They have been sometimes likened to Fielding and Smollett, but no comparison could be more misleading or less happy. Smollett stands on a level distinctly and considerably below that of Fielding; but Dickens cannot be said to stand thus beneath Thackeray. If the comparison were to hold at all, Thackeray must be compared to Fielding, for Fielding is not in the least like Dickens; but then it must be allowed that Smollett wants many of the higher qualities of the author of "David Copperfield." It is natural that men should compare Dickens and Thackeray; but the two will be found to be curiously unlike when once a certain superficial resemblance ceases to impress the mind. Their ways of treating a subject were not only dissimilar but were absolutely in contrast. They started, to begin with, under the influence of a totally different philosophy of life, if that is to be called a philosophy which was probably only the result of peculiarity of temperament in each case. Dickens set out on the literary theory that in life everything is better than it looks; Thackeray with the impression that it is worse. In the one case there was somewhat too much of a mechanical interpretation of everything for the best in the best possible world; in the other the savour of cynicism was at times a little annoying. As each writer went on the peculiarity became more and more of a mannerism. But the writings of Dickens were far more deeply influenced by his peculiarities of feeling or philosophy than those of Thackeray.

A large share of the admiration which is popularly given to Dickens is undoubtedly a tribute to what people consider his cheerful view of life. In that too he is especially English. In this country the artistic theory of France and other continental nations, borrowed from the æsthetic principles of Greece, which accords the palm to the artistic treatment rather than to the subject, or the purpose, or the way of looking at things, has found hardly any broad and general acceptance. The popularity of Dickens was therefore in great measure due to the fact that he set forth life in cheerful lights and colours. He had of course gifts of far higher artistic value; he could describe anything that he saw with a fidelity which Balzac could not have surpassed; and like Balzac he had a way of inspiring inanimate objects with a mystery and motive of their own which gave them often a weird and fascinating individuality. But it must be owned that if Dickens's peculiar "philosophy" were effaced from his works the fame of the author would remain a very different thing from what it is at the present moment. On the other hand it would be possible to cut out of Thackeray all his little cynical, melancholy sentences and reduce his novels to bare descriptions of life and character, without affecting in any sensible degree his influence on the reader or his position in literature. Thackeray had a marvellously keen appreciation of human motive and character within certain limits. If Dickens could draw an old quaint house or an odd family interior as faithfully and yet as picturesquely as Balzac, so not Balzac himself could analyse and illustrate the weaknesses and foibles of certain types of character with greater subtlety of judgment and force of exposition than Thackeray. Dickens had little or no knowledge of human character, and evidently cared very little about the study. His stories are fairy tales made credible by the masterly realism with which he described all the surroundings and accessories, the costumes and the ways of his men and women. While we are reading of a man whose odd peculiarities strike us with a sense of reality as if we had observed them for ourselves many a time, while we see him surrounded by streets and houses



which seem to us rather more real and a hundred times more interesting than those through which we pass every day, we are not likely to observe very quickly or to take much heed of the fact when we do observe it, that the man acts on various important occasions of his life as only people in fairy stories ever do act. Thackeray cared little for descriptions of externals. He left his readers to construct for themselves the greater part of the surroundings of his personages from his description of the characters of the personages themselves. He made us acquainted with the man or woman in his chapters as if we had known him or her all our life; and knowing Pendennis or Becky Sharp we had no difficulty in constructing the surroundings of either for ourselves. Thus it will be seen that these two eminent authors had not only different ideas about life but absolutely contrasting principles of art. One worked from the externals inward; the other realised the unseen, and left the externals to grow of themselves. Three great peculiarities, however, they shared. Each lived and wrote of and for London. Dickens created for art the London of the middle and poorer classes; Thackeray did the same for the London of the upper class and for those who strive to imitate their ways. Neither ever even attempted to describe a man kept constantly above and beyond the atmosphere of mere egotism by some sustaining greatness or even intensity of purpose. In Dickens, as in Thackeray, the emotions described are those of conventional life merely. This is not to be said in disparagement of either artist. It is rather a tribute to an artist's knowledge of his own capacity and sphere of work that he only attempts to draw what he thoroughly understands. But it is proper to remark of Dickens and of Thackeray, as of Balzac, that the life they described was after all but the life of a coterie or a quarter, and that there existed side by side with their field of work a whole world of emotion, aspiration, struggle, defeat and triumph, of which their brightest pages do not give a single suggestion. This is the more curious to observe because of the third peculiarity which Dickens and Thackeray had in common—a love for the purely

ideal and romantic in fiction. There are many critics who hold that Dickens in "Barnaby Rudge" and the "Tale of Two Cities," Thackeray in "Esmond" exhibited powers which vindicated for their possessors a very rare infusion of that higher poetic spirit which might have made of both something greater than the painters of the manners of a day and a class. But to paint the manners of a day and a class as Dickens and Thackeray have done is to deserve fame and the gratitude of posterity. The age of Victoria may claim in this respect an equality at least with that of the reign which produced Fielding and Smollett; for if there are some who would demand for Fielding a higher place on the whole than can be given either to Dickens or to Thackeray, there are not many who would not say that either Dickens or Thackeray is distinctly superior to Smollett. The age must claim a high place in art which could in one department alone produce two such competitors. Their effect upon their time was something marvellous. People talked Dickens or thought Thackeray.

Passion, it will be seen, counted for little in the works of Dickens and Thackeray. Dickens, indeed, could draw a conventionally or dramatically wicked man with much power and impressiveness; and Thackeray could suggest certain forms of vice with wonderful delicacy and yet vividness. But the passions which are common to all human natures in their elementary moods made but little play in the novels of either writer. Both were in this respect, for all their originality and genius in other ways, highly and even exclusively conventional. There was apparently a sort of understanding in the mind of each—indeed Thackeray has admitted as much in his preface to "Pendennis"—that men and women were not to be drawn as men and women are known to be, but with certain reserves to suit conventional etiquette. It is somewhat curious that the one only novel-writer who during the period we are now considering came into any real rivalry with them, was one who depended on passion altogether for her material and her success. The novels of a young woman, Charlotte Brontë, compelled all English society

into a recognition not alone of their own sterling power and genius, but also of the fact that profound and passionate emotion was still the stuff out of which great fiction could be constructed. "Exultations, agonies, and love, and man's unconquerable mind" were taken by Charlotte Brontë as the matter out of which her art was to produce its triumphs. The novels which made her fame, "Jane Eyre," and "Villette," are positively aflame with passion and pain. They have little variety. They make hardly any pretence to accurate drawing of ordinary men and women in ordinary life, or at all events under ordinary conditions. The authoress had little of the gift of the mere story-teller; and her own peculiar powers were exerted sometimes with indifferent success. The familiar on whom she depended for her inspiration would not always come at call. She had little genuine relish for beauty except the beauty of a weird melancholy and of decay. But when she touched the chord of elementary human emotion with her best skill, then it was impossible for her audience not to feel that they were under the spell of a power rare indeed in our well-ordered days. The absolute sincerity of the author's expression of feeling lent it great part of its strength and charm. Nothing was ever said by her because it seemed to society the right sort of thing to say. She told a friend that she felt sure "Jane Eyre" would have an effect on readers in general because it had so great an effect on herself. It would be possible to argue that the great strength of the books lay in their sincerity alone; that Charlotte Brontë was not so much a woman of extraordinary genius as a woman who looked her own feelings fairly in the face, and painted them as she saw them. But the capacity to do this would surely be something which we could not better describe than by the word genius. Charlotte Brontë was far from being an artist of fulfilled power. She is rather to be regarded as one who gave evidence of extraordinary gifts which might with time and care, and under happier artistic auspices, have been turned to such account as would have made for her a fame with the very chiefs of her tribe. She died at an age hardly more mature than

that at which Thackeray won his first distinct literary success; much earlier than the age at which some of our greatest novelists brought forth their first completed novels. But she left a very deep impression on her time, and the time that has come and is coming after her. No other hand in the age of Queen Victoria has dealt with human emotion so powerfully and so truthfully. Hers are not cheerful novels. A cold grey mournful atmosphere hangs over them. One might imagine that the shadow of an early death is forecast on them. They love to linger among the glooms of nature, to haunt her darkling wintry twilights, to study her stormy sunsets, to link man's destiny and his hopes, fears, and passions somehow with the glare and gloom of storm and darkness, and to read the symbols of his fate as the fore-doomed and passion-wasted Antony did in the cloud-masses that are "black vesper's pageants." The supernatural had a constant vague charm for Charlotte Brontë, as the painful had. Man was to her a being torn between passionate love and the more ignoble impulses and ambitions and common-day occupations of life. Woman was a being of equal passion, still more sternly and cruelly doomed to repression and renunciation. It was a strange fact that in the midst of the splendid material successes and the quietly triumphant intellectual progress of this most prosperous and well-ordered age, when even in its poetry and its romance passion was systematically torped down and put in thrall to good taste and propriety, this young writer should have suddenly come out with her books all thrilling with emotion, and all protesting in the strongest possible manner against the theory that the loves and hates of men and women had been tamed by the process of civilisation. Perhaps the very novelty of the apparition was in great measure a part of its success. Charlotte Brontë did not, indeed, influence the general public, or even the literary public, to anything like the same extent that Thackeray and Dickens did. She appeared and passed away almost in a moment. As Miss Martineau said of her, she stole like a shadow into literature and then became a shadow again. But she struck very deeply into the heart of the time. If her writings

were only, as has been said of them, a cry of pain, yet they were such a cry as once heard lingers and echoes in the mind for ever after. Godwin declared that he would write in "Caleb Williams" a book which would leave no man who read it the same that he was before. Something not unlike this might be said of "Jane Eyre." No one who read it was exactly the same that he had been before he opened its weird and wonderful pages.

The novels of Mrs. Gaskell must not be without record. "Ruth" and "Cranford" and "Wives and Daughters"—this last left unfinished, its authoress called away by death—are pictures of quiet English life with its homely joys and sorrows, which linger long in the mind and have a peculiar place in our literature.

No man could well have made more of his gifts than Lord Lytton. Before the coming up of Dickens and Thackeray he stood above all living English novelists. Perhaps this is rather to the reproach of the English fiction of the day than to the renown of Lord Lytton. But even after Dickens and Thackeray and Charlotte Bronte and later and not less powerful and original writers had appeared in the same field, he still held a place of great mark in literature. That he was not a man of genius is, perhaps, conclusively proved by the fact that he was able so readily to change his style to suit the tastes of each day. He began by writing of fops and *roués* of a time now almost forgotten; then he made heroes of highwaymen and murderers; afterwards he tried the philosophic and mildly didactic style; then he turned to mysticism and spiritualism; later still he wrote of the French Second Empire. Whatever he tried to do he did well. Besides his novels he wrote plays and poems; and his plays are among the very few modern productions which manage to keep the stage. He played, too, and with much success, at being a statesman and an orator. Not Demosthenes himself had such difficulties of articulation to contend against in the beginning; and Demosthenes conquered his difficulties, while some of those in the way of Lord Lytton proved unconquerable. Yet Lord Lytton did somehow contrive to become a great speaker, and to seem

occasionally like a great orator in the House of Commons. He was at the very least a superb phrasemaker; and he could turn to account every scrap of knowledge in literature, art, or science, which he happened to possess. His success in the House of Commons was exactly like his success in romance and the drama. He threw himself into competition with men of far higher original gifts, and he made so good a show of contesting with them that in the minds of many the victory was not clearly with his antagonists. There was always, for example, a considerable class, even among educated persons, who maintained that Lytton was in his way quite the peer of Thackeray and Dickens. His plays, or some of them, obtained a popularity only second to those of Shakespeare; and although nobody cared to read them, yet people were always found to go and look at them. When Lytton went into the House of Commons for the second time he found audiences which were occasionally tempted to regard him as the rival of Gladstone and Bright. Not a few persons saw in all this only a sort of superb *charlatanerie*; and indeed it is certain that no man ever made and kept a genuine success in so many different fields as those in which Lord Lytton tried and seemed to succeed. But he had splendid qualities; he had everything short of genius. He had indomitable patience, inexhaustible power of self-culture, and a capacity for assimilating the floating ideas of the hour which supplied the place of originality. He borrowed from the poet the knack of poetical expression, and from the dramatist the trick of construction; from the Byronic time its professed scorn for the false gods of the world; and from the moer modern period of popular science and sham mysticism its extremes of materialism and magic; and of these and various other borrowings he made up an article which no one else could have constructed out of the same materials. He was not a great author; but he was a great literary man. Mr. Disraeli's novels belong in some measure to the school of "Pelham" and "Godolphin." But it should be said that Mr. Disraeli's "Vivian Grey" was published before "Pelham" made its appearance. In all that belongs to political life Mr. Disraeli's novels are

production. It had little or nothing in common with the comic periodicals of Paris. It ignored absolutely and of set purpose the whole class of subjects which make up three-fourths of the stock in trade of a French satirist. The escapades of husbands and the infidelities of wives form the theme of by far the greater number of the humorous sketches with pen or pencil in Parisian comicalities. *Punch* kept altogether aloof from such unsavoury subjects. It had an advantage, of course, which was habitually denied to the French papers—it had unlimited freedom of political satire and caricature. Politics and the more trivial troubles and trials of social life gave subjects to *Punch*. The inequalities of class, and the struggles of ambitious and vain persons to get into circles higher than their own, or at least to imitate their manners—these supplied for *Punch* the place of the class of topics on which French papers relied when they had to deal with the domestic life of the nation. *Punch* started by being somewhat fiercely radical, but gradually toned away into a sort of intelligent and respectable Conservatism. Its artistic sketches were from first to last admirable. Some men of true genius wrought for it with the pencil as others did with the pen. Doyle, Leech, and Tenniel were men of whom any school of art might well be proud. A remarkable sobriety of style was apparent in all their humours. Of later years caricature has had absolutely no place in the illustrations to *Punch*. The satire is quiet, delicate, and no doubt superficial. It is a satire of manners, dress, and social ways altogether. There is justice in the criticism that of late more especially the pages of *Punch* give no idea whatever of the emotions of the English people. There is no suggestion of grievance, of bitterness, of passion, of pain. It is all made up of the pleasures and annoyances of the kind of life which is enclosed in a garden party. But it must be said that *Punch* has thus always succeeded in maintaining a good, open, convenient, neutral ground, where young men and maidens, girls and boys, elderly politicians and staid matrons, law, trade, science, all sects and creeds, may safely and pleasantly mingle. It is not so, to be sure,

that great satire is wrought. A Swift or a Juvenal is not thus to be brought out. But a votary of the present would have his answer simple and conclusive: We live in the age of *Punch*; we do not live in the age of Juvenal or Swift.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE LORCHA "ARROW"

AFTER the supposed settlement of the Eastern Question at the Congress of Paris, a sort of languor seems to have come over Parliament and the public mind in England. Lord John Russell endeavoured unsuccessfully to have something done which should establish in England a genuine system of national education. He proposed a series of resolutions, one of which laid down the principle that after a certain appointed time, when any school district should have been declared to be deficient in adequate means for the education of the poor, the Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the county, city, or borough, should have power to impose a school rate. This was a step in the direction of compulsory education. It anticipated the principle on which the first genuine measure for national instruction was founded many years after. It was of course rejected by the House of Commons when Lord John Russell proposed it. Public opinion, both in and out of Parliament, was not nearly ripe for such a principle then. All such proposals were quietly disposed of with the observation that that sort of thing might do very well for Prussians, but would never suit Englishmen. That was a time when a Prussian was regarded in England as a dull beer-bemused servile creature, good for nothing better than to grovel before his half-inebriated monarchs, and to get the stick from his incapable military officers. The man who suggested then that perhaps some day the Prussians might show that they knew how to fight, would have been set down as on a par intellectually with the narrow-minded grumbler



who did not believe in the profound sagacity of the Emperor of the French. For a country of practical men England is ruled to a marvellous extent by phrases, and the term "un-English" was destined for a considerable time to come to settle all attempts at the introduction of any system of national education which even touched on the compulsory principle. One of the regular attempts to admit the Jews to Parliament was made, and succeeded in the House of Commons, to fail, as usual, in the House of Lords. The House of Lords itself was thrown into great perturbation for a time by the proposal of the Government to confer a peerage for life on one of the judges, Sir James Parke. Lord Lyndhurst strongly opposed the proposal, on the ground that it was the beginning of an attempt to introduce a system of life-peerages, which would destroy the ancient and hereditary character of the House of Lords, allow of its being at any time broken up and remodelled according to the discretion of the minister in power, and reduce it in fact to the level of a continental life senate. Many members of the House of Commons were likewise afraid of the innovation; it seemed to foreshadow the possible revival of an ancient principle of Crown nomination which might be applied to the representative as well as to the hereditary chamber, seeing that at one time English sovereigns did undoubtedly assume the right of nominating members of the House of Commons. The Government, who had really no reactionary or revolutionary designs in their mind, settled the matter for the time by creating Sir James Parke Baron Wensleydale in the usual way, and the object they had in view was quietly accomplished many years later, when the appellate jurisdiction of the Lords was remodelled.

Sir George Lewis was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was as yet not credited with anything like the political ability which he afterwards proved that he possessed. It was the fashion to regard him as a mere bookman, who had drifted somehow into Parliament, and who, in the temporary absence of available talent, had been thrust into the office lately held by Mr. Gladstone. The contrast indeed between the style of his speaking and

that of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli, was enough to dishearten any political assembly. Mr. Gladstone had brought to his budget speeches an eloquence that brightened the driest details, and made the wilderness of figures to blossom like the rose. Mr. Disraeli was able to make a financial statement burst into a *bouquet* of fireworks. Sir George Lewis began by being nearly inaudible, and continued to the last to be oppressed by the most ineffective and unattractive manner and delivery. But it began to be gradually found out that the monotonous, halting, feeble manner covered a very remarkable power of expression; that the speaker had great resources of argument, humour, and illustration; that every sentence contained some fresh idea or some happy expression. It was not very long before an experienced observer of Parliament declared that Sir George Lewis delivered the best speeches with the worst manner known to the existing House of Commons. After a while a reaction set in, and the capacity of Lewis ran the risk of being overrated quite as much as it had been undervalued before. In him, men said, was seen the coming prime minister of England. Time, as it will be seen afterwards, did not allow Sir George Lewis any chance of making good this prediction. He was undoubtedly a man of rare ability and refined intellect; an example very uncommon in England of the thinker, the scholar, and the statesman in one. His speeches were an intellectual treat to all with whom matter counted for more than manner. One who had watched parliamentary life from without and within for many years, said he had never had his deliberate opinion changed by a speech in the House of Commons but twice, and each time it was an argument from Sir George Lewis that accomplished the conversion.

For the present, however, Sir George Lewis was regarded only as the sort of statesman whom it was fitting to have in office just then; the statesman of an interval in whom no one was expected to take any particular interest. The attention of the public was a good deal distracted from political affairs by the simultaneous outbreak of new forms

of crime and fraud. The trial of Palmer in the Rugeley poisoning case, the trial of Dove in the Leeds poisoning case, these and similar events set the popular mind into wild alarm as to the prevalence of strychnine poisoning everywhere. The failure and frauds of the Royal British Bank, the frauds of Robson and Redpath, gave for the time a sort of idea that the financial principles of the country were crumbling to pieces. The culmination of the extraordinary career of John Sadleir was fresh in public memory. This man, it will be recollected, was the organiser and guiling spirit of the Irish Brigade, the gang of adventurers whom we have already described as trading on the genuine grievances of their country to get power and money for themselves. John Sadleir overdid the thing. He embezzled, swindled, forged, and finally escaped justice by committing suicide on Hampstead Heath. So fraudulent had his life been that many persons persisted in believing that his supposed suicide was but another fraud. He had got possession—such was the theory—of a dead body which bore some resemblance to his own form and features; he had palmed this off as his own corpse done to death by poison; and had himself contrived to escape with a large portion of his ill-gotten money. This extraordinary parody and perversion of the plot of Jean Paul Richter's story of "Siebenkäs" really found many faithful believers. It is worth mentioning, not as a theory credible in itself, but as an evidence of the belief that had got abroad as to the character and the stratagems of Sadleir. The brother of Sadleir was expelled from the House of Commons; one of his accomplices, who had obtained a Government appointment and had embezzled money, contrived to make his escape to the United States; and the Irish Brigade was broken up. It is only just to say that the best representatives of the Irish Catholics and the Irish national party, in and out of Parliament, had never from the first believed in Sadleir and his band, and had made persistent efforts to expose them.

About this same time Mr. Cyrus W. Field, an energetic American merchant, came over to this country to explain

to its leading merchants and scientific men a plan he had for constructing an electric telegraph line underneath the Atlantic. Mr. Field had had this idea strongly in his mind for some years, and he made a strenuous effort to impress the English public with a conviction of its practicability. He was received by the merchants of Liverpool on November 12, 1856, in their Exchange Rooms, and he made a long statement explaining his views, which was listened to with polite curiosity. Mr. Field had, however, a much better reception on the whole than M. de Lesseps, who came to England a few months later to explain his project for constructing a ship canal across the Isthmus of Suez. The proposal was received with coldness, and more than coldness, by engineers, capitalists, and politicians. Engineers showed that the canal could not be made, or at least maintained when made; capitalists proved that it never could pay; and politicians were ready to make it plain that such a canal, if made, would be a standing menace to English interests. Lord Palmerston, a few days after, frankly admitted that the English Government were opposed to the project, because it would tend to the more easy separation of Egypt from Turkey, and set afloat speculations as to a ready access to India. M. de Lesseps himself has given an amusing account of the manner in which Lord Palmerston denounced the scheme in an interview with the projector. Luckily neither Mr. Field nor M. de Lesseps was a person to be lightly discouraged. Great projectors are usually as full of their own ideas as great poets. M. de Lesseps had in the end perhaps more reason to be alarmed at England's sudden appreciation of his scheme than he had in the first instance to complain of the cold disapprobation with which her Government encountered it.

The political world seemed to have made up its mind for a season of quiet. Suddenly that happened which always does happen in such a condition of things—a storm broke out. To those who remember the events of that time, three words will explain the nature of the disturbance. "The lorcha *Arrow*," will bring back the recollection of one of the most curious political convulsions known in this

country during our generation. For years after the actual events connected with the lorcha *Arrow*, the very name of that ominous vessel used to send a shudder through the House of Commons. The word suggested first an impassioned controversy which had left a painful impression on the condition of political parties, and next an effort of futile persistency to open the whole controversy over again, and force it upon the notice of legislators who wished for nothing better than to be allowed to forget it.

In the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, on February 3, 1857, the following passage occurred:—"Her Majesty commands us to inform you that acts of violence, insults to the British flag, and infraction of treaty rights, committed by the local Chinese authorities at Canton, and a pertinacious refusal of redress, have rendered it necessary for her Majesty's officers in China to have recourse to measures of force to obtain satisfaction." The acts of violence, the insults to the British flag, and the infraction of treaty rights alleged to have been committed by the Chinese authorities at Canton had for their single victim the lorcha *Arrow*. The lorcha *Arrow* was a small boat built on the European model. The word "Lorcha" is taken from the Portuguese settlement at Macao at the mouth of the Canton river. It often occurs in treaties with the Chinese authorities. "Every British schooner, cutter, lorcha, &c.," are words that we constantly find in these documents. On October 8, 1856, a party of Chinese in charge of an officer boarded a boat, called the *Arrow*, in the Canton river. They took off twelve men on a charge of piracy, leaving two men in charge of the lorcha. The *Arrow* was declared by its owners to be a British vessel. Our Consul at Canton, Mr. Parkes, demanded from Yeh, the Chinese Governor of Canton, the return of the men, basing his demand upon the ninth Article of the Supplemental Treaty of 1843, entered into subsequently to the Treaty of 1842. We need not go deeper into the terms of this Treaty than to say, that there could be no doubt that it did not give the Chinese authorities any right to seize Chinese offenders, or supposed offenders, on board an English vessel. It

merely gave them a right to require the surrender of the offenders at the hands of the English. The Chinese Governor, Yeh, contended, however, that the lorch was not an English but a Chinese vessel—a Chinese pirate, venturing occasionally for her own purposes to fly the flag of England which she had no right whatever to hoist. Under the Treaties with China, British vessels were to be subject to consular authority only. The Treaty provided amply for the registration of vessels entitled to British protection, for the regular renewal of the registration, and for the conditions under which the registration was to be granted or renewed. The *Arrow* had somehow obtained a British registration, but it had expired about ten days before the occurrence in the Canton river, and even the British authorities who had been persuaded to grant the registration were not certain whether, with the knowledge they subsequently obtained, it could legally be renewed. We believe it may be plainly stated at once, as a matter of fact, that the *Arrow* was not an English vessel, but only a Chinese vessel which had obtained by false pretences the temporary possession of a British flag. Mr. Consul Parkes, however, was fussy, and he demanded the instant restoration of the captured men, and he sent off to our Plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, Sir John Bowring, for authority and assistance in the business.

Sir John Bowring was a man of considerable ability. At one time he seemed to be a candidate for something like fame. He was the political pupil and the literary executor of Jeremy Bentham, and for some years was editor of the *Westminster Review*. He had a very large and varied, although not profound or scholarly, knowledge of European and Asiatic languages (there was not much scientific study of languages in his early days), he had travelled a great deal, and had sat in Parliament for some years. He understood political economy, and had a good knowledge of trade and commerce; and in those days a literary man who knew anything about trade and commerce was thought a person of almost miraculous versatility. Bowring had many friends and admirers, and he set up early for a sort of great man. He was full of self-conceit, and without any very clear

idea of political principles on the large scale. Nothing in all his previous habits of life, nothing in the associations and friendships by which he had long been surrounded, nothing in his studies or his writings warranted any one in expecting that when placed in a responsible position in China at a moment of great crisis he would have taken on him to act the part which aroused such a controversy. It would seem as if his eager self-conceit would not allow him to resist the temptation to display himself on the field of political action as a great English plenipotentiary, a master-spirit of the order of Clive or Warren Hastings, bidding England be of good cheer, and compelling inferior races to grovel in the dust before her. Bowring knew China as well as it was then likely that an Englishman could know the "huge mummy empire by the hands of custom wrapped in swathing bands." He had been Consul for some years at Canton, and he had held the post of chief superintendent of trade there. He sent to the Chinese authorities, and demanded the surrender of all the men taken from the *Arrow*. Not merely did he demand the surrender of the men, but he insisted that an apology should be offered for their arrest, and a formal pledge given by the Chinese authorities that no such act should ever be committed again. If this were not done within forty-eight hours, naval operations were to be begun against the Chinese. This sort of demand was less like that of a dignified English official, conscious of the justice of his cause and the strength of his country, than like the demeanour of Ancient Pistol formulating his terms to the fallen Frenchman on the battle-field: "I'll fer him, and firke him, and ferret him—discuss the same in French unto him." Sir John Bowring called out to the Chinese Governor, Yeh, that he would fer him, and firke him, and ferret him, and bade the same be discussed in Chinese unto him. Yeh sent back all the men, saying in effect that he did so to avoid the ferring, and firking, and ferreting, and he even undertook to promise that for the future great care should be taken that no British ship should be visited improperly by Chinese officers. But he could not offer an apology for the particular case of the *Arrow*, for he still maintained, as was indeed the fact,

that the *Arrow* was a Chinese vessel, and that the English had nothing to do with her. In truth Sir John Bowring had himself written to Consul Parkes to say that the *Arrow* had no right to hoist the English flag, as her licence, however obtained, had expired; but he got over this difficulty by remarking that after all the Chinese did not know that fact, and that they were therefore responsible. Accordingly Sir John Bowring carried out his threat and immediately made war on China. He did something worse than making war in the ordinary way; he had Canton bombarded by the fleet which Admiral Sir Michael Seymour commanded. From October 23 to November 13 naval and military operations were kept up continuously. A large number of forts and junks were taken and destroyed. The suburbs of Canton were battered down in order that the ships might have a clearer range to fire upon the city. Shot and shell were poured in upon Canton. Sir John Bowring thought the time appropriate for reviving certain alleged treaty rights for the admission of representatives of British authority into Canton. During the parliamentary debates that followed, Sir John Bowring was accused by Lord Derby and Mr. Cobden of having a sort of monomania about getting into Canton. Curiously enough, in his autobiographical fragment Sir John Bowring tells that when he was a little boy he dreamed that he was sent by the King of England as ambassador to China. In his later days he appears to have been somewhat childishly anxious to realise this dream of his infancy. He showed all a child's persistent strength of will and weakness of reason in enforcing his demand, and he appears, at one period of the controversy, to have thought that it had no other end than his solemn entry into Canton. Meanwhile Commissioner Yeh retaliated by foolishly offering a reward for the head of every Englishman. Throughout the whole business Sir John Bowring contrived to keep himself almost invariably in the wrong, and even where his claim happened to be in itself good he managed to assert it in a manner at once untimely, imprudent, and indecent.

This news from China created a considerable sensation in England, although not many public men had any idea of the manner in which it was destined to affect the House



of Commons. On February 24, 1857, Lord Derby brought forward in the House of Lords a motion, comprehensively condemning the whole of the proceedings of the British authorities in China. The debate would have been memorable if only for the powerful speech in which the venerable Lord Lyndhurst supported the motion, and exposed the utter illegality of the course pursued by Sir John Bowring. Lord Lyndhurst declared that the proceedings of the British authorities could not be justified upon any principle, either of law or of reason; that the *Arrow* was simply a Chinese vessel, built in China, and owned and manned by Chinamen; and he laid it down as a "principle which no one will successfully contest" that you may give "any rights or any privileges to a foreigner or a foreign vessel as against yourself, but you cannot grant to any such foreigner a single right or privilege as against a foreign state." In other words, if the British authorities chose to give a British licence to a Chinese pirate boat which would secure her some immunity against British law, that would be altogether an affair for themselves and their Government; but they could not pretend by any British register or other document to give a Chinese boat in Chinese waters a right of exemption from the laws of China. Perhaps the whole question never could have arisen if it were not for the fact on which Lord Lyndhurst commented that, "when we are talking of treaty transactions with Eastern nations, we have a kind of loose law and loose notion of morality in regard to them." The question as to the right conferred by the licence, such as it was, to hoist the British flag, could not have been disposed of more effectually than it was by the Chinese Governor Yeh himself, in a single sentence. "A lorcha," as Yeh put it, "owned by a Chinese, purchased a British flag; did that make her a British vessel?" The Lord Chancellor was actually driven to answer Lord Lyndhurst by contending that no matter whether the lorcha was legally or illegally flying the British flag, it was not for the Chinese to assume that she was flying it illegally, and that they had no right to board the vessel on the assumption that she was not what she pretended to be. To show the value of that argument, it is only necessary to say that if such were the recognised

principle, every pirate in the Canton river would have nothing further to do than to hoist any old scrap of British bunting, and sail on, defiant, under the very eyes of the Chinese authorities. The Governor of Canton would be compelled to make a formal complaint to Sir John Bowring, and trust meanwhile that a spirit of fair play would induce the pirates to wait for a formal investigation by the British authorities. Otherwise neither Chinese nor British could take any steps to capture the offenders.

The House of Lords rejected the motion of Lord Derby by a majority of 146 to 110. On February 26 Mr. Cobden brought forward a motion in the House of Commons, declaring that "the papers which have been laid upon the table fail to establish satisfactory grounds for the violent measures resorted to at Canton in the late affair of the *Arrow*," and demanding "that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China." This must have been a peculiarly painful task for Mr. Cobden. He was an old friend of Sir John Bowring, with whom he had always supposed himself to have many or most opinions in common. But he followed his convictions as to public duty in despite of his personal friendship. It is a curious evidence of the manner in which the moral principles become distorted in a political contest, that during the subsequent elections it was actually made a matter of reproach to Mr. Cobden, that while acknowledging his old friendship for Sir John Bowring he was nevertheless found ready to move a vote of censure on his public conduct. The debate was remarkable more for the singular political combination which it developed as it went on, than even for its varied ability and eloquence. Men spoke and voted on the same side who had probably never been brought into such companionship before and never were afterwards. Mr. Cobden found himself supported by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, by Mr. Roebuck and Sir E. B. Lytton, by Lord John Russell and Mr. Whiteside, by Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards the Marquis of Salisbury, Sir Frederick Thesiger, Mr. Roundell Palmer, afterwards Lord Selborne, Mr. Sidney Herbert, and Mr. Milner Gibson. The discussion lasted four nights, and

it was only as it went on that men's eyes began to open to its political importance. Mr. Cobden had probably never dreamed of the amount or the nature of the support his motion was destined to receive. The Government and the Opposition alike held meetings out of doors to agree upon a general line of action in the debate and to prepare for the result. Lord Palmerston was convinced that he would come all right in the end, but he felt that he had made himself obnoxious to the advanced Liberals by his indifference, or rather hostility, to every project of reform, and he persuaded himself that the opportunity would be eagerly caught at by them to make a combination with the Tories against him. In all this he was deceiving himself, as he had done more than once before. There is not the slightest reason to believe that anything but a growing conviction of the insufficiency of the defence set up for the proceedings in Canton influenced the great majority of those who spoke and voted for Mr. Cobden's motion. The truth is, that there has seldom been so flagrant and so inexcusable an example of high-handed lawlessness in the dealings of a strong with a weak nation. When the debate first began it is quite possible that many public men still believed some explanation or defence was coming forward, which would enable them to do that which the House of Commons is always unwilling not to do—to sustain the action of an English official in a foreign country. As the discussion went on it became more and more evident that there was no such defence or explanation. Men found their consciences coerced into a condemnation of Sir John Bowring's conduct. It was almost ludicrous when the miserable quibblings and evasions of the British officials came to be contrasted with the cruelly clear arguments of the Chinese. The reading of these latter documents came like a practical enforcement of Mr. Cobden's description of the Chinese Empire as a State "which had its system of logic before the time of Aristotle, and its code of morals before that of Socrates." The vote of censure was carried by 263 votes against 247—a majority of 16.

Mr. Disraeli, in the course of a clever and defiant speech made towards the close of the long debate, had challenged

Lord Palmerston to take the opinion of the country on the policy of the Government. "I should like," he exclaimed, "to see the programme of the proud leaders of the Liberal party—no reform, new taxes, Canton blazing, Peking invaded." Lord Palmerston's answer was virtually that of Brutus: "Why, I will see thee at Philippi then." He announced two or three days after that the Government had resolved on a dissolution and an appeal to the country. Lord Palmerston knew his Pappenheimers. He understood his countrymen. He knew that a popular Minister makes himself more popular by appealing to the country on the ground that he has been condemned by the House of Commons for upholding the honour of England and coercing some foreign power somewhere. His address to the electors of Tiverton differed curiously in its plan of appeal from that of Lord John Russell to the electors of the City, or that of Mr. Disraeli to those of Buckinghamshire. Lord John Russell coolly and wisely argued out the controversy between him and Lord Palmerston, and gave very satisfactory reasons to prove that there was no sufficient justification for the bombardment of Canton. Mr. Disraeli described Lord Palmerston as the Tory Chief of a Radical Cabinet, and declared that "with no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the people from the consideration of their own affairs to the distractions of foreign politics." "His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed." In later days a charge not altogether unlike that was made against an English Prime Minister who was not Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston understood the temper of the country too well to trouble himself about arguments of any kind. He came to the point at once. In his address to the electors of Tiverton he declared that "an insolent barbarian, wielding authority at Canton, violated the British flag, broke the engagements of treaties, offered rewards for the heads of British subjects in that part of China, and planned their destruction by murder, assassination, and poison." That of course was all-sufficient. The "insolent barbarian" was in itself almost enough. • Governor Yeh certainly was not a barbarian.

His argument on the subject of International Law obtained the endorsement of Lord Lyndhurst. His way of arguing the political and commercial case compelled the admiration of Lord Derby. His letters form a curious contrast to the documents contributed to the controversy by the representatives of British authority in China. However, he became for electioneering purposes an insolent barbarian; and the story of a Chinese baker who was said to have tried to poison Sir John Bowring became transfigured into an attempt at the wholesale poisoning of Englishmen in China by the express orders of the Chinese Governor. Lord Palmerston further intimated that he and his Government had been censured by a combination of factious persons who, if they got into power and were prepared to be consistent, must apologise to the Chinese Government and offer compensation to the Chinese Commissioner. "Will the British nation," he asked, "give their support to men who have thus endeavoured to make the humiliation and degradation of their country the stepping-stone to power?"

No, to be sure; the British nation would do nothing of the kind. Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Disraeli, Sir E. B. Lytton, Lord Grey, Lord Robert Cecil—these were the craven Englishmen, devoid of all patriotic or manly feeling, who were trying to make the humiliation and degradation of their country a stepping-stone to power. They were likewise the friends and allies of the insolent barbarian. There were no music-halls of the modern type in those days. Had there been such, the denunciations of the insolent barbarian, and of his still baser British friends, would no doubt have been shouted forth night after night in the metropolis, to the accompaniment of rattling glasses and clattering pint-pots. Even without the alliance of the music-halls, however, Lord Palmerston swept the field of his enemies. His victory was complete. The defeat of the men of peace, in especial, was what Mr. Ruskin once called, not a fall but a catastrophe. Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, W. J. Fox, Layard, and many other leading opponents of the Chinese policy, were left without seats. There was something peculiarly painful in the circumstances of Mr. Bright's

defeat at Manchester. Mr. Bright was suffering from severe illness. In the opinion of many of his friends his health was thoroughly broken. He had worked in public life with a generous disregard of his physical resources ; and he was compelled to leave the country, and seek rest first in Italy and afterwards in Algeria. It was not a time when even political enmity could with a good grace have ventured to visit on him the supposed offences of his party. But the "insolent barbarian" phrase overthrew him too. He sent home from Florence a farewell address to the electors of Manchester, which was full of quiet dignity. "I have esteemed it a high honour," thus ran one passage of the address, "to be one of your representatives, and have given more of mental and physical labour to your service than is just to myself. I feel it scarcely less an honour to suffer in the cause of peace, and on behalf of what I believe to be the true interests of my country, though I could have wished that the blow had come from other hands, at a time when I could have met face to face those who dealt it."

Not long after, Mr. Cobden, one of the least sentimental and the most unaffected of men, speaking in the Manchester Free-trade Hall of the circumstances of Mr. Bright's rejection from Manchester, and the leave-taking address which so many regarded as the last public word of a great career, found himself unable to go on with that part of his speech. An emotion more honourable to the speaker and his subject than the most elaborate triumph of eloquence, checked the flow of the orator's words, and for the moment made him inarticulate.

Lord Palmerston came back to power with renewed and redoubled strength. The little war with Persia, which will be mentioned afterwards, came to an end in time to give him another claim as a conqueror on the sympathies of the constituencies. His appointments of bishops had given great satisfaction to the Evangelical party, and he had become for the time quite a sort of Church hero, much to the amusement of Lord Derby, who made great sport of "Palmerston, the true Protestant" ; "Palmerston, the only Christian Prime Minister." In the Royal Speech at the

opening of Parliament it was announced that the differences between this country and China still remained unadjusted, and that therefore "her Majesty had sent to China a Plenipotentiary fully entrusted to deal with all matters of difference; and that Plenipotentiary will be supported by an adequate naval and military force in the event of such assistance becoming necessary." It would be almost superfluous to say that the assistance of the naval and military force thus suggested was found to be necessary. The Government, however, had more serious business with which to occupy themselves before they were at liberty to turn to the easy work of coercing the Chinese.

The new Parliament was engaged for some time in passing the Act for the establishment of a Court of Divorce—that is to say, abolishing the ancient jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts respecting divorce, and setting up a regular court of law, the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Court, to deal with questions between husband and wife. The passing of the Divorce Act was strongly contested in both Houses of Parliament, and indeed was secured at last only by Lord Palmerston's intimating very significantly that he would keep the Houses sitting until the measure had been disposed of. Mr. Gladstone, in particular, offered to the bill a most strenuous opposition. He condemned it on strictly conscientious grounds. Yet it has to be said, even as a question of conscience, that there was divorce in England before the passing of the Act; the only difference being that the Act made divorce somewhat cheap and rather easy. Before it was the luxury of the rich; the Act brought it within the reach of almost the poorest of her Majesty's subjects. We confess that we do not see how any great moral or religious principle is violated in the one case any more than in the other. The question at issue was not whether divorce should be allowed by the law; but only whether it should be high-priced or comparatively inexpensive. It is certainly a public advantage, as it seems to us, that the change in the law has put an end to the debates that used to take place in both Houses of Parliament. When any important bill of divorce was under discussion, the members crowded the House, the case was

discussed in all its details as any clause in a bill is now debated; long speeches were made by those who thought the divorce ought to be granted and those who thought the contrary; and the time of Parliament was occupied in the edifying discussion as to whether some unhappy woman's shame was or was not clearly established. In one famous case, where a distinguished peer, orator, and statesman sought a divorce from his wife, every point of the evidence was debated in Parliament for night after night. Members spoke in the debate who had known nothing of the case until the bill came before them. One member, perhaps, was taken with a vague sympathy with the wife; he set about to show that the evidence against her proved nothing. Another sympathised with husbands in general, and made it his business to emphasise every point that told of guilt in the woman. More than one earnest speaker during those debates expressed an ardent hope that the time might come when Parliament should be relieved from the duty of undertaking such unsuitable and scandalous investigations. It must be owned that public decency suffers less by the regulated action of the 'Divorce Court than it did under this preposterous and abominable system. We cannot help adding too that the Divorce Act, judging by the public use made of it, certainly must be held to have justified itself in a merely practical sense. It seems to have been thoroughly appreciated by a grateful public. It was not easy after a while to get judicial power enough to keep the supply of divorces up to the ever-increasing demand.

Lord Palmerston then appears to be furnished with an entirely new lease of power. The little Persian War has been brought to a close; the country is not disposed to listen to any complaint as to the manner in which it was undertaken. The settlement of the dispute with China promised to be an easy piece of business. The peace party were everywhere overthrown. No one could well have anticipated that within less than a year from the general election a motion made in the House of Commons by one whom it unseated, was to compel the Government of Lord Palmerston suddenly to resign office.



## CHAPTER XXXI

## TRANSPORTATION

THE year 1857 would have been memorable, if for no other reason, because it saw the abolition of the system of transportation. Transportation as a means of getting rid of part of our criminal population, dates from the time of Charles II., when the judges gave power for the removal of offenders to the North American colonies. The fiction of the years coming immediately after took account of this innovation, and one of the most celebrated, if not exactly one of the finest, of Defoe's novels, deals with the history of a convict thus sent out to Virginia. Afterwards the revolt of the American colonies and other causes made it necessary to send convicts farther away from civilisation. The punishment of transportation was first regularly introduced into our criminal law in 1717, by an Act of Parliament. In 1787 a cargo of criminals was shipped out to Botany Bay, on the eastern shore of New South Wales, and near Sydney, the present thriving capital of the colony. Afterwards the convicts were also sent to Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania; and to Norfolk Island, a lonely island in the Pacific, some eight hundred miles from the New South Wales shore. Norfolk Island became the penal settlement for the convicted among convicts; that is to say, criminals, who, after transportation to New South Wales, committed new crimes there, might be sent by the Colonial authorities for sterner punishment to Norfolk Island.

Nothing can seem on the face of it a more satisfactory way of disposing of criminals than the system of transportation. In the first place it got rid of them, so far as the people at home were concerned; and for a long time that was about all that the people at home cared. Those who had committed crimes not bad enough to be disposed of by the simple and efficient operation of the gallows, were got rid of in a manner almost as prompt and effective by

the plan of sending them out in shiploads to America or to Australia. It looked, too, as if the system ought to be satisfactory in every way and to everybody. The convicts were provided with a new career, a new country, and a chance of reformation. They were usually after a while released from actual durance in the penal settlement, and allowed conditionally to find employment, and to make themselves, if they could, good citizens. Their labour, it was thought, would be of great service to the colonists. The Act of 1717 recited that "in many of his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America there was a great want of servants who, by their labour and industry, might be the means of improving and making the said colonies and plantations more useful to this nation." At that time statesmen only thought of the utility of the colonies to this nation. Philanthropy might therefore for a while beguile itself with the belief that the transportation system was a benefit to the transported as well as to those among whom they were sent. But the colonists very soon began to complain. The convicts who had spent their period of probation in hulks or prisons generally left those homes of horror with natures so brutalised as to make their intrusion into any community of decent persons an insufferable nuisance. Pent up in penal settlements by themselves, the convicts turned into demons; drafted into an inhabited colony, they were too numerous to be wholly absorbed by the population, and they carried their contagion along with them. New South Wales began to protest against their presence. Lord John Russell, when Secretary for the Colonies in 1840, ordered that no more of the criminal refuse should be carted out to that region. Then Tasmania had them all to herself for a while. Lord Stanley, when he came to be at the head of the Colonial Office, made an order that the free settlers of Tasmania were not to obtain convict labour at any lower rates than the ordinary market price; and Tasmania had only put up with the presence of the convicts at all for the sake of getting their labour cheap. Tasmania, therefore, began to protest against being made the refuse-ground for our scoundrelism. Mr. Gladstone, while Colonial Secretary,

suspended the whole system for a while, but it was renewed soon after. Sir George Grey endeavoured to make the Cape of Good Hope a receptacle for a number of picked convicts; but in 1849 the inhabitants of Cape Colony absolutely refused to allow a shipload of criminals to be discharged upon their shores, and it was manifestly impossible to compel them to receive such disagreeable guests. By this time public opinion in England was ready to sympathise to the full with any colony which stood out against the degrading system. For a long time there had been growing up a conviction that the transportation system carried intolerable evils with it. Romilly and Bentham had condemned it long before. In 1837 a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider and report on the system. The committee included Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Charles Buller, Sir W. Molesworth, and Lord Howick, afterwards Earl Grey. The evidence they collected settled the question in the minds of all thinking men. The Rev. Walter Clay, son of the famous prison chaplain, Rev. John Clay, says in his memoirs of his father, that probably no volume was ever published in England of which the contents were so loathsome as those of the appendix to the committee's report. There is not much exaggeration in this. The reader must be left to imagine for himself some of the horrors which would be disclosed by a minute account of what happened in a penal den like Norfolk Island, where a number of utterly brutalised men were left to herd together without anything like beneficent control, without homes, and without the society of women. In Norfolk Island the convicts worked in chains. They were roused at daylight in the morning, and turned out to labour in their irons, and huddled back in their dens at night. In some rare cases convicts were sent directly from England to Norfolk Island; but as a rule the island was kept as a place of punishment for criminals who, already convicted in the mother country, were found guilty of new crimes during their residence in New South Wales.

The condition of things in New South Wales was such

as civilisation has not often seen. In Sydney especially it was extraordinary. When the convicts were sent out to the colony they received each in turn, after a certain period of penal probation, a conditional freedom; in other words, a ticket of leave. They were allowed to work for the colonists, and to support themselves. Any one who wanted labourers or artisans or servants, could apply to the authorities and have convicts assigned to him for the purpose. Female convicts as well as male were thus employed. There was, therefore, a large number of convicts, men and women, moving about freely in the active life of Sydney, doing business, working in trades, performing domestic service; to all appearance occupying the place that artisans and labourers and servants occupy among ourselves. But there was a profound difference. The convict labourers and servants were in reality little better than slaves. They were assigned to masters and mistresses, and they had to work. Stern laws were enacted, and were no doubt required, to keep those terrible subordinates in order. The lash was employed to discipline the men; the women were practically unmanageable. The magistrates had the power, on the complaint of any master or mistress, to order a man to be flogged with as many as fifty lashes. Some of the punishment lists remind a reader of the days of slavery in the United States. On every page we come on entries of the flogging of men for disobeying the orders of a master or mistress; for threatening a fellow-servant, for refusing to rub down the horse or clean the carriage, or some such breach of discipline. A master, who was also a magistrate, was not allowed to adjudicate in his own case; but practically it would seem that masters and mistresses could have their convict servants flogged whenever they thought fit. At that time a great many of the native population, "the Blacks" as they were called, used to stream into the town of Sydney, as the Indians now come into Salt Lake City or some other western town of America. In some of the outlying houses they would lounge into the kitchens, as beggars used to do in Ireland in old days, looking out for any scraps that might be given

to them. It was a common sight then to see half a dozen of the native women absolutely naked hanging round the doors of houses where they expected anything. Between the native women and the convicts at large an almost indiscriminate intercourse set in. The "black" men would bring their wives into the town and offer them for a drop of rum or a morsel of tobacco. In this extraordinary society there were these three strands of humanity curiously intertwined. There was the civilised Englishman with his money, his culture, his domestic habits; there was the outcast of English civilisation, the gaol-bird fresh from the prison and the hulks; and there was the aboriginal naked savage. In the drawing-room sat the wife and daughters of the magistrate; in the stable was the convict, whose crimes had perhaps been successive burglaries crowned with attempted murder; in the kitchen were women servants taken from the convict depôt and known to be prostitutes; and hanging round the door were the savages, men and women. All the evidence seems to agree that with hardly any exceptions the women convicts were literally prostitutes. There were some exceptions, which it is well to notice. Witnesses who were questioned on the subject gave it as the result of their experience, that women convicted of any offence whatever in this country and sent out to New South Wales invariably took to profligacy, unless they were Irish women. That is to say, it did not follow that an Irish convict woman must necessarily be a profligate woman; it did follow as a matter of fact in the case of other women. Some of the convicts married women of bad character and lived on their immoral earnings, and made no secret of the fact. Many of these husbands boasted that they made their wives keep them in what they considered luxuries by the wages of their sin. Tea and sugar were great luxuries to them at that time, and it was a common saying among men of this class that their wives must take care to have the tea and sugar bag filled every day. The convicts soon inoculated the natives with the vilest vices and the foulest diseases of civilisation. Many an English lady found that her woman servants went off in the night somewhere and came back in

the morning, and they knew perfectly well that the women had been off on some wild freak of profligacy ; but it was of no use to complain. In the midst of all this it would appear that a few of the convicts did behave well ; that they kept to work with iron industry, and rose in the world, and were respected. In some cases the wives of convicts went out to New South Wales and started farms or shops, and had their husbands assigned to them as servants, and got on tolerably well. But in general the convicts led a life of utter profligacy, and they corrupted all that came within their reach. One convict said to a judge : " Let a man be what he will, when he comes out here he is soon as bad as the rest ; a man's heart is taken from him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast." Perpetual profligacy, incessant flogging—this was the combination of the convict's life. Many of the convicts liked the life on the whole, and wrote to friends at home urging them to commit some offence, get transported, and come out to New South Wales. An idle ruffian had often a fine time of it there. This of course does not apply to Norfolk Island. No wretch could be so degraded or so unhappy anywhere else as to find relief in that hideous lair of suffering and abomination.

Such was the condition of things described to the Committee of the House of Commons in 1837. It is right and even necessary to say that we have passed over almost without allusion some of the most hideous of the revelations. We have kept ourselves to abominations which at all events bear to be spoken of. From the publication of the evidence taken before the Committee any one might have seen that the transportation system was doomed. It was clear that if any colony made up its mind to declare that it would not endure the thing any longer, no English Minister could venture to say that he would force it on the colonists. The doomed and odious system, however, continued for a long time to be put in operation as far as possible. It was most tempting both as to theory and as to practice. It was an excellent thing for the people at home to get rid of so much of their ruffianism ; and it was easy to persuade ourselves that the

system gave the convicts a chance of reform, and 'ought to be acceptable to the colonists.

The colonists, however, made up their minds at last in most places, and would not have any more of our convicts. Only in Western Australia were the people willing to receive them on any conditions, and Western Australia had but scanty natural resources and could in any case harbour very few of our outcasts. The discovery of gold in Australia settled the question of those colonies being troubled any more with our transportation system; for the greatest enthusiast for transportation would hardly propose to send out gangs of criminals to a region glowing with the temptations of gold. There were some thoughts of establishing a convict settlement on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria on the north side of the great Australian Island. Some such scheme was talked of at various intervals. It always, however, broke down on a little examination. One difficulty alone was enough to dispose of it effectually. It was impossible, after the revelations of the Committee of the House of Commons, to have a convict settlement of men alone; and if it was proposed to found a colony, where were the women to come from? Were respectable English and Irish girls to be enticed to go out and become the wives of convicts? What statesman would make such a proposal? The wildest projects were suggested. Unfortunately in the places thought most suitable for a settlement there happened to be no savage women. Let the convict men be married to convict women, said another philosopher. But even if any Colonial Minister could have been found hardy enough to approach Parliament with a scheme for the foundation of a colony on the basis of common crime, it had to be said that there were not nearly enough of convict women to supply brides for even a tolerable proportion of the convict men. Another suggestion it is only necessary to mention for the purpose of showing to what lengths the votaries of an idea will go in their effort to make it fit in with the actual conditions of things. There were persons who thought it would not be a bad plan to get rid of two nuisances at once, our convicts and a portion of what is euphuistically termed our

"social evil," by founding a penal settlement on some lonely shore, and sending out cargoes of the abandoned women of our large towns to be the wives of the present and the mothers of the future colonists. When it came to propositions of this kind it was clear that there was an end to any serious discussion as to the possibility of founding a convict settlement. As late as 1856 Committees of both Houses of Parliament declared themselves greatly in favour of the transportation system—that is, of some transportation system, of an ideal transportation system; but also recorded their conviction that it would be impossible to carry on the known system any longer.

The question then arose what was England to do with the criminals whom up to that time she had been able to shovel out of her way. All the receptacles were closed but Western Australia, and that counted for almost nothing. Some prisoners were then, and since, sent out for a part of their term to Gibraltar and Bermuda; but they were always brought back to this country to be discharged, so that they may be considered as forming a part of the ordinary class of criminals kept in detention here. The transportation system was found to carry evils in its train which did not directly belong to its own organisation. It had been for a long time the practice of England and Scotland to send out to a colony only those who were transported for ten years and upwards, and to retain those condemned for shorter periods in the hulks and other convict prisons. In these hideous hulks the convicts were huddled together very much as in Norfolk Island, with scarcely any superintendence or discipline, and the result was that they became what were called with hardly any exaggeration "floating hells." It was quite clear that the whole system of our dealings with our convicts must be revised and reorganised. In 1853 the Government took a step which has been well described as an avowal that we must take the complete charge of our criminals upon ourselves. A bill was brought in by the Ministry to substitute penal servitude for transportation, unless in cases where the sentence was for fourteen years and upwards. The bill reduced the scale of punishment; that is to say, made a shorter period of penal servitude



supply the place of a longer term of transportation. Lord Palmerston was Home Secretary at this time. It was during that curious episode in his career described in the first volume when he adopted, if such an expression may be used, the business of Home Secretary in order, as he put it, to learn how to deal with the concerns of the country internally, and to be brought in contact with his fellow-countrymen. He threw all his characteristic energy into the work of carrying through the measure for the establishment of a new system of secondary punishments. It was during the passing of the bill through the House of Lords that Lord Grey suggested the introduction of a modification of the ticket-of-leave system which was in practice in the colonies. The principle of the ticket-of-leave was that the convict should not be kept in custody during the whole period of his sentence, but that he should be allowed to pass through a period of conditional liberty before he obtained his full and unrestricted freedom. Lord Grey also urged that the sentences to penal servitude should correspond in length with sentences for transportation. The Government would not accept this latter suggestion, but they adopted the principle of the ticket-of-leave. The bill was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Cranworth, the Lord Chancellor. When it came down to the House of Commons there was some objection made to the ticket-of-leave clauses, but the Government carried them through. The effect of the measure was to substitute penal servitude for transportation in all cases except those where the sentence of transportation was for fourteen years and upwards. Now there can be no doubt that the principle of the ticket-of-leave is excellent. But it proved on its first trial in this country the most utter delusion. It got no fair chance at all. It was understood by the whole English public that the object of the ticket-of-leave was to enable the authorities to give a conditional discharge from custody to a man who had in some way proved his fitness for such a relaxation of punishment, and that the eye of the police would be on him even during the period of his conditional release. This was in fact the construction put on the Act in Ireland, where accordingly the ticket-of-leave system

was worked with the most complete success. Under the management of Sir Walter Crofton, chairman of the Board of Prison Directors, the principle was applied exactly as any one might have supposed it would be applied everywhere, and as indeed the very conditions endorsed on the ticket-of-leave distinctly suggested. The convicts in Ireland were kept away from the general community in a little penal settlement near Dublin; they were put at first to hard, monotonous, and weary labour; they were then encouraged to believe that with energy and good conduct they could gradually obtain relaxation of punishment, and even some small rewards; they were subjected to a process of really reforming discipline; they got their conditional freedom as soon as they had satisfactorily proved that they deserved and were fit for it; but even then they had to report themselves periodically to the police, and they knew that if they were seen to be relapsing into old habits and old companionships they were certain to be sent back to the penal settlement to begin the hard work over again. The result was substantial and lasting reform. It was easy for the men who were let out conditionally to obtain employment. A man who had Sir Walter Crofton's ticket-of-leave was known by that very fact to have given earnest of good purpose and steady character. The system in Ireland was therefore all that its authors could have wished it to be. But for some inscrutable reason the Act was interpreted in this country as simply giving every convict a right, after a certain period of detention, to claim a ticket-of-leave provided he had not grossly violated any of the regulations of the prison, or misconducted himself in some outrageous manner. In 1856 Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, told the House of Commons that there never was a more fallacious idea than the supposition that a ticket-of-leave was a certificate of good character, and that a man only obtained such a ticket if he could prove that he had reformed. A ticket-of-leave, he went on to explain, was indeed withheld in the case of very bad conduct; but in any ordinary case the convicts, "unless they have transgressed the prison rules, and acted in such a manner as to incur an unfavourable report from the prison authorities, are, after a stated

period of imprisonment, entitled as a matter of course to a ticket-of-leave."

It would be superfluous to examine the working of such a system as that which Sir George Grey described. A number of scoundrels whom the judges had sentenced to be kept in durance for so many years were without any conceivable reason turned loose upon society long before the expiration of their sentence. They were in England literally turned loose upon society, for it was held by the authorities here that it might possibly interfere with the chance of a gaol-bird's getting employment, if he were seen to be watched by the police. The police therefore were considerably ordered to refrain from looking after them. "I knew you once," says the hero of a poem by Mr. Browning, "but in Paradise, should we meet, I will pass nor turn my face." The police were ordered to act thus discreetly if they saw Bill Sikes asking for employment in some wealthy and quiet household. They certainly knew him once, but now they were to pass nor turn their face. Nothing, surely, that we know of the internal arrangements of Timbuctoo, to adopt the words of Sydney Smith, warrants us in supposing that such a system would have been endured there for a year. Fifty per cent. of the ruffians released on ticket-of-leave were afterwards brought up for new crimes, and convicted over again. Of those who although not actually convicted were believed to have relapsed into their old habits, from sixty to seventy per cent. relapsed within the first year of their liberation. Baron Bramwell stated from the bench that he had had instances of criminals coming before him who had three sentences overlapping each other. The convict was set free on ticket-of-leave, convicted of some new crime, and re-committed to prison; released again on ticket-of-leave, and convicted once again, before the period of his original sentence had expired. An alarm sprang up in England; and like all alarms it was supported both by exaggeration and misconception. The system pursued with the convicts was bad enough; but the popular impression ascribed to the ticket-of-leave men every crime committed by any one who had been previously convicted and imprisoned. A

man who had worked out the whole of his sentence, and who therefore had to be discharged, committed some crime immediately after. Excited public opinion described it as a crime committed by a ticket-of-leave man. Two committees sat, as has already been said, in 1856. The result of the public alarm and the parliamentary reconsideration of the whole subject, was the bill brought in by Sir George Grey in 1857. This measure extended the provisions of the Act of 1853 by substituting in all cases a sentence of penal servitude for one of transportation. It extended the limits of the penal-servitude sentences by making them correspond with the terms of transportation to which men had previously been sentenced. It gave power also to pass sentences of penal servitude for shorter periods than was allowed by former legislation, allowing penal servitude for as short a period as three years. It attached to all sentences of penal servitude the liability to be removed from this country to places beyond seas fitted for their reception; and it restricted the range of the remission of sentences. The Act, it will be seen, abolished the old-fashioned transportation system altogether, but it left the power to the authorities to have penal servitude carried out in any of the colonies where it might be thought expedient. The Government had still some idea of utilising Western Australia for some of our offenders. But nothing came of this plan, or of the clause in the new Act which was passed to favour it; and as a matter of fact transportation was abolished. How the amended legislation worked in other respects we shall have an opportunity of examining hereafter.

Transportation was not the only familiar institution which came to an end in this year. The Gretna Green marriages became illegal in 1857, their doom having been fixed for that time by an Act passed in the previous session. Thenceforward such marriages were unlawful, unless one of the parties had lived at least twenty-one days previously in Scotland. The hurried flight to the border, the post-chaise and the panting steeds, the excited lovers, the pursuing father, passed away into tradition. Lydia Languish had to reconcile herself to the licence and the

blessing, and even the writers of fiction might have given up without a sigh an incident which had grown wearisome in romance long before it ceased to be interesting in reality.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE SEPOY

ON the 23rd of June 1857 the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey was celebrated in London. One object of the celebration was to obtain the means of raising a monument to Clive in his native country. At such a meeting it was but natural that a good deal should be said about the existing condition of India, and the prospects of that great empire which the genius and the daring of Clive had gone so far to secure for the English Crown. It does not appear, however, as if any alarm was expressed with regard to the state of things in Bengal, or as if any of the noblemen and gentlemen present believed that at that very moment India was passing through a crisis more serious than Clive himself had had to encounter. Indeed, a month or so before a Bombay journal had congratulated itself on the fact that India was quiet "throughout." Yet at the hour when the Plassey celebration was going on the great Indian Mutiny was already six weeks old, had already assumed full and distinctive proportions, was already known in India to be a convulsion destined to shake to its foundations the whole fabric of British rule in Hindostan. A few evenings after the celebration there was some cursory and casual discussion in Parliament about the doubtful news that had begun to arrive from India; but as yet no Englishman at home took serious thought of the matter. The news came at last with a rush.

Never in our time, never probably at any time, came such news upon England as the first full story of the outbreak in India. It came with terrible, not unnatural

exaggeration. England was horror-stricken by the stories of wholesale massacres of English women and children; of the most abominable tortures, the most degrading outrages inflicted upon English matrons and maidens. The newspapers ran over with the most horrifying and the most circumstantial accounts of how English ladies of the highest refinement were dragged naked through the streets of Delhi, and were paraded in their nakedness before the eyes of the aged King of Delhi, in order that his hatred might be feasted with the sight of the shame and agony of the captives. Descriptions were given, to which it is unnecessary to make any special allusions now, of the vile mutilations and tortures inflicted on Englishwomen to glut the vengeance of the tyrant. The pen of another Procopius could alone have done full justice to the narratives which were poured in day after day upon the shuddering ears of Englishmen, until all thought even of the safety of the Indian Empire was swallowed up in a wild longing for revenge on the whole seed, breed, and race of the mutinous people who had tortured and outraged our countrywomen. It was not till the danger was all over, and British arms had reconquered Northern India, that England learned the truth with regard to these alleged outrages and tortures. Let us dispose of this most painful part of the terrible story at the very beginning, and once for all. During the Indian Mutiny the blood of innocent women and children was cruelly and lavishly spilt; on one memorable occasion with a bloodthirstiness that might have belonged to the most savage times of mediæval warfare. But there were no outrages, in the common acceptation, upon women. No Englishwomen were stripped or dishonoured, or purposely mutilated. As to this fact all historians of the Mutiny are agreed.

But if the first stories of the outbreak that reached England dealt in exaggerations of this kind, they do not seem to have exaggerated, they do not seem to have even adequately appreciated, the nature of the crisis with which England was suddenly called upon to deal. The fact was, that throughout the greater part of the north

and north-west of the great Indian peninsula there was a rebellion of the native races against English power. It was not alone the Sepoys who rose in revolt. It was not by any means a merely military mutiny. It was a combination, whether the growth of deliberate design and long preparation, or the sudden birth of chance and unexpected opportunity—a combination of military grievance, national hatred and religious fanaticism, against the English occupiers of India. The native princes and the native soldiers were in it. The Mahomedan and the Hindoo forgot their own religious antipathies to join against the Christian. Hatred and panic were the stimulants of that great rebellious movement. The quarrel about the greased cartridges was but the chance spark flung in among all the combustible material. If that spark had not lighted it, some other would have done the work. In fact, there are thoughtful and well-informed historians who believe that the incident of the greased cartridges was a fortunate one for our people; that coming as it did it precipitated unexpectedly a great convulsion which, occurring later, and as the result of more gradual operations, might have been far more dangerous to the perpetuity of our rule.

Let us first see what were the actual facts of the outbreak. When the improved (Enfield) rifle was introduced into the Indian army, the idea got abroad that the cartridges were made up in paper greased with a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard. It appears that the paper was actually greased, but not with any such material as that which religious alarm suggested to the native troops. Now a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard would have been, above all things, unsuitable for use in cartridges to be distributed among our Sepoys; for the Hindoo regards the cow with religious veneration, and the Mahomedan looks upon the hog with utter loathing. In the mind of the former something sacred to him was profaned; in that of the latter something unclean and abominable was forced upon his daily use. It was in 1856 that the new rifles were sent out from England, and the murmur against their use began at once. Various efforts were made to allay the panic among the native troops. The use of the

cartridges complained of was discontinued by orders issued in January 1857. The Governor-General sent out a proclamation in the following May, assuring the army of Bengal that the tales told to them of offence to their religion or injury to their caste being meditated by the Government of India, were all malicious inventions and falsehoods. Still the idea was strong among the troops that some design against their religion was meditated. A mutinous spirit began to spread itself abroad. In March some of the native regiments had to be disbanded. In April some executions of Sepoys took place for gross and open mutiny. In the same month several of the native Bengal cavalry in Meerut refused to use the cartridges served out to them, although they had been authoritatively assured that the paper in which the cartridges were wrapped had never been touched by any offensive material. On May 9 these men were sent to the gaol. They had been tried by court martial, and were sentenced, eighty of them, to imprisonment and hard labour for ten years, the remaining five to a similar punishment for six years. They had chains put on them in the presence of their comrades, who no doubt regarded them as martyrs to their religious faith, and they were thus publicly marched off to the common gaol. The guard placed over the gaol actually consisted of Sepoys.

The following day, Sunday, May 10, was memorable. The native troops in Meerut broke into open mutiny. The *summa dies*, the *ineluctabile tempus* had come. They fired upon their officers, killed a colonel and others, broke into the gaol, released their comrades, and massacred several of the European inhabitants. The European troops rallied and drove them from their cantonments or barracks. Then came the momentous event, the turning point of the mutiny; the act that marked out its character, and made it what it afterwards became. Meerut is an important military station between the Ganges and the Jumna, thirty-eight miles north-east from Delhi. In the vast palace of Delhi, almost a city in itself, a reeking Alsatia of lawless and privileged vice and crime, lived the aged King of Delhi, as he was called; the dis-



established, but not wholly disendowed, sovereign, the descendant of the great Timour, the last representative of the Grand Mogul. The mutineers fled along the road to Delhi; and some evil fate directed that they were not to be pursued or stopped on their way. Unchecked, unpursued, they burst into Delhi, and swarmed into the precincts of the palace of the king. They claimed his protection; they insisted upon his accepting their cause and themselves. They proclaimed him Emperor of India, and planted the standard of rebellion against English rule on the battlements of his palace. They had found in one moment a leader, a flag, and a cause, and the mutiny was transfigured into a revolutionary war. The Sepoy troops, in the city and the cantonments on the Delhi ridge, two miles off, and overlooking the city, at once began to cast in their lot with the mutineers. The poor old puppet whom they set up as their emperor was some eighty years of age; a feeble creature, believed to have a mild taste for poetry and weak debauchery. He had long been merely a pensioner of the East India Company. During the early intrigues and struggles between the English and French in India the Company had taken the sovereigns of Delhi under their protection, nominally to save them from the aggressiveness of the rival power; and, as might be expected, the Delhi monarchs soon became mere pensionaries of the British authorities. It had even been determined that after the old king's death a different arrangement should be made; that the title of king would not be allowed any longer, and that the privileges of the palace, the occupants of which were thus far allowed to be a law to themselves, should be restricted or abolished. A British commissioner directed affairs in the city, and British troops were quartered on the Delhi ridge outside. Still the king was living, and was called a king. He was the representative of the great dynasty whose name and effigies had been borne by all the coin of India until some twenty years before. He stood for legitimacy and divine right; and he supplied all the various factions and sects of which the mutiny was composed, or to be composed, with a visible and an accept-

able head. If the mutineers flying from Meerut had been promptly pursued and dispersed, or captured, before they reached Delhi, the tale we have to tell might have been shorter and very different. But when they reached, unchecked, the Jumna glittering in the morning light, when they swarmed across the bridge of boats that spanned it, and when at length they clamoured under the windows of the palace that they had come to restore the rule of the Delhi dynasty, they had all unconsciously seized one of the great critical moments of history, and converted a military mutiny into a national and religious war.

This is the manner in which the Indian Rebellion began and assumed its distinct character. But this dry statement of facts would go a very short way towards explaining how the mutiny of a few regiments came to assume the aspect of a rebellion. Mutinies were not novelties in India. There had been some very serious outbreaks before the time of the greased cartridges. The European officers of the Company had themselves mutinied in Bengal nearly a century before; and that time the Sepoys stood firm by the Company whose salt they had eaten. There was a more general and serious mutiny at Vellore, near Madras, in 1806; and the sons of the famous Tippoo Sahib took part with it, and endeavoured to make it the means of regaining the forfeited power of their house. It had to be dealt with as if it were a war, and Vellore had to be recaptured. In 1849 a Bengal regiment seized a fortress near Lahore. Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, once protested that thirty regiments of the Bengal army were ripe for revolt. Napier, however, seems to have thought only of military mutiny, and not of religious and political rebellion. At Meerut itself, the very cradle of the outbreak, a pamphlet was published in 1851 by Colonel Hodgson, to argue that the admission of the priestly caste too freely into the Bengal army would be the means of fomenting sedition among the native troops. But there was a combination of circumstances at work to bring about such a revolt as Napier never dreamed of; a revolt as different from the outbreak he contemplated as the French Revolution differed from the Mutiny of the Nore. These

causes affected variously but at once the army, the 'princes, and the populations of India.

"The causes and motives for sedition," says Bacon—and the words have been cited with much appropriateness and effect by Sir J. W. Kaye in his "History of the Sepoy War"—"are innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, deaths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate, and whatsoever in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause." Not all these various impulses to rebellion were stirring perhaps in India, but assuredly many, possibly the majority, of them were at work. As is usual in such cases too, it happened that many changes made, nay, many privileges disinterestedly conferred by the ruling power in India for the benefit and pleasure of the native levies turned into other causes and stimulants of sedition and rebellion. Let us speak first of the army. The Bengal army was very different in its constitution and conditions from that of Bombay or Madras, the other great divisions of Indian government at that time. In the Bengal army, the Hindoo Sepoys were far more numerous than the Mahomedans, and were chiefly Brahmins of high caste; while in Madras and Bombay the army was made up, as the Bengal regiments are now, of men of all sects and races without discrimination. Until the very year before the Mutiny the Bengal soldier was only enlisted for service in India, and was exempted from any liability to be sent across the seas; across the black water which the Sepoy dreaded and hated to have to cross. No such exemption was allowed to the soldiers of Bombay or Madras; and in July 1856 an order was issued by the military authorities to the effect that future enlistments in Bengal should be for service anywhere without limitation. Thus the Bengal Sepoy had not only been put in the position of a privileged and pampered favourite, but he had been subjected to the indignity and disappointment of seeing his privileges taken away from him. He was indeed an excellent soldier, and was naturally made a favourite by many of his commanders. But he was very proud, and was rigidly tenacious of what

ne considered his rights. He lived apart with his numerous and almost limitless family representing all grades of relationship; he cooked his food apart and ate it apart; he acknowledged one set of governing principles while he was on parade, and had a totally different code of customs and laws and morals to regulate his private life. The tie of blood relationship was very strong with the Sepoy. The elder Sepoy always took good care to keep his regiment well supplied with recruits from among his own family. As the Highland sergeant in the British army endeavours to have as many as possible of his kith and clan in the regiment with himself; as the Irishman in the New York police force is anxious to get as many of his friends and fellow countrymen as may be into the same ranks, so the Sepoy did his best to surround himself with men of his blood and of his ways. There was therefore the spirit of a clan and of a sect pervading the Sepoy regiments; a strong current flowing beneath the stream of superficial military discipline and *esprit de corps*. The Sepoy had many privileges denied to his fellow-religionists who were not in the military ranks. Let it be added that he was very often deeply in debt; that his pay was frequently mortgaged to usurers who hung on him as the crimps do upon a sailor in one of our seaport towns; and that therefore he had something of Catiline's reason for desiring a general upset and a clearing off of old responsibilities.

•But we must above all other things take into account, when considering the position of the Hindoo Sepoy, the influence of the tremendous institution of caste. An Englishman or European of any country will have to call his imaginative faculties somewhat vigorously to his aid in order to get even an idea of the power of this monstrous superstition. The man who by the merest accident, by the slightest contact with anything that defiled, had lost caste, was excommunicated from among the living, and was held to be for evermore accursed of God. His dearest friend, his nearest relation, shrank back from him in alarm and abhorrence. When Helen Macgregor, in Scott's romance, would express her sense of the degradation that had been put upon her, she declares that her mother's bones would

shrink away from her in the grave, if her corpse were to be laid beside them. The Sepoy fully believed that his mother's bones ought to shrink away from contact with the polluted body of the son who had lost caste. Now, it had become from various causes a strong suspicion in the mind of the Sepoy that there was a deliberate purpose in the minds of the English rulers of the country to defile the Hindoos, and to bring them all to the dead level of one caste or no caste. The suspicion in part arose out of the fact that this institution of caste, penetrating as it did so subtly and so universally into all the business of life, could not but come into frequent collision with any system of European military and civil discipline, however carefully and considerately managed. No doubt there was in many instances a lack of consideration shown for the Hindoo's peculiar and very perplexing tenets. The Englishman is not usually a very imaginative personage; nor is he rich in those sympathetic instincts which might enable a ruler to enter into and make allowance for the influence of sentiments and usages widely different from his own. To many a man fresh from the ways of England, the Hindoo doctrines and practices appeared so ineffably absurd that he could not believe any human beings were serious in their devotion to them, and he took no pains to conceal his opinion as to the absurdity of the creed, and the hypocrisy of those who professed it. Some of the elder officers and civilians were imbued very strongly with a conviction that the work of open, and what we may call aggressive, proselytism, was part of the duty of a Christian; and in the best faith and with the purest intentions they thus strengthened the growing suspicion that the mind of the authorities was set on the defilement of the Hindoos. Nor was it among the Hindoos alone that the alarm began to be spread abroad. It was the conviction of the Mahomedans that their faith and their rites were to be tampered with as well. It was whispered among them everywhere that the peculiar baptismal custom of the Mahomedans was to be suppressed by law, and Mahomedan women were to be compelled to go unveiled in public. The slightest alterations in any system gave fresh confirmation to the suspicions that were

afloat among the Hindoos and Mussulmans. When a change was made in the arrangements of the prisons, and the native prisoners were no longer allowed to cook for themselves, a murmur went abroad that this was the first overt act in the conspiracy to destroy the caste, and with it the bodies and souls of the Hindoos. Another change must be noticed too. At one time it was intended that the native troops should be commanded for the most part by native officers. The men would, therefore, have had something like sufficient security that their religious scruples were regarded and respected. But by degrees the clever, pushing, and capable Briton began to monopolise the officers' posts everywhere. The natives were shouldered out of the high positions, until at length it became practically an army of native rank and file commanded by Englishmen. If we remember that a Hindoo sergeant of lower caste would, when off parade, often abase himself with his forehead in the dust before a Sepoy private who belonged to the Brahmin order, we shall have some idea of the perpetual collision between military discipline and religious principle which affected the Hindoo members of an army almost exclusively commanded by Europeans and Christians.

There was, however, yet another influence, and one of tremendous importance in determining the set of that otherwise vague current of feeling which threatened to disturb the tranquil permanence of English rule in India. We have spoken of the army and of its religious scruples; we must now speak of the territorial and political influences which affected the princes and the populations of India. There had been just before the outbreak of the Mutiny a wholesale removal of the landmarks, a striking application of a bold and thorough policy of annexation; a gigantic system of reorganisation applied to the territorial arrangements of the north and north-west of the great Indian peninsula. A master-spirit had been at work at the reconstruction of India; and if you cannot make revolutions with rosewater, neither can you make them without reaction.

Lord Dalhousie had not long left India on the appointment of Lord Canning to the Governor-Generalship

when the Mutiny broke out. Lord Dalhousie was a man of commanding energy, of indomitable courage, with the intellect of a ruler of men, and the spirit of a conqueror. The statesmen of India perform their parts upon a vast stage, and yet they are to the world in general somewhat like the actors in a provincial theatre. They do not get the fame of their work and their merits. Men have arisen in India whose deeds, if done in Europe, would have ranked them at least with the Richelieus and Bismarcks of history, if not actually with the Cæsars and Charlemagnes; and who are yet condemned to what may almost be called a merely local renown; a record on the roll of great officials. Lord Dalhousie was undoubtedly a great man. He had had some parliamentary experience in England and in both Houses; and he had been Vice-President and subsequently President of the Board of Trade under Sir Robert Peel. He had taken great interest in the framing of regulations for the railway legislation of the mania season of 1844 and 1845. Towards the close of 1847 Lord Hardinge was recalled from India, and Lord Dalhousie was sent out in his place. Never was there in any country an administration of more successful activity than that of Lord Dalhousie. He introduced cheap postage into India; he made railways; he set up lines of electric telegraph. Within fifteen months, according to one of his biographers, the telegraph was in operation from Calcutta to Agra, thence to Attock on the Indus, and again from Agra to Bombay and Madras. He devoted much of his attention to irrigation, to the making of great roads, to the work of the Ganges Canal. He was the founder of a comprehensive system of native education; especially female education, a matter so difficult and delicate in a country like India. He put down infanticide and the odious and extraordinary Thug system, and he carried out with vigour Lord William Bentinck's Act for the suppression of the Suttee or burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands. These are only some of the evidences of his unrelaxing, all-conquering energy. They are but illustrative; they are far indeed from being exhaustive even

as a catalogue. But Lord Dalhousie was not wholly engaged in such works as these. Indeed his noble and glorious triumphs over material, intellectual, and moral obstacles run some risk of being forgotten or overlooked by the casual reader of history in the storm of that fierce controversy which his other enterprises called forth. During his few years of office he annexed the Punjaub; he incorporated part of the Burmese territory in our dominions; he annexed Nagpore, Sattara, Jhansi, Berar, and Oudh. We are not called upon here to consider in detail the circumstances of each of these annexations, or to ask the reader to pass judgment on the motives and the policy of Lord Dalhousie. It is fair to say that he was not by any means the mere imperial proconsul he is often represented to be, thirsting with the ardour of a Roman conqueror to enlarge the territory of his own State at any risk or any sacrifice of principle. There was reason enough to make out a plausible case for even the most questionable of his annexations; and in one or two instances he seems only to have resolved on annexation reluctantly and because things had come to that pass that he saw no other safe alternative left to him. But his own general policy is properly expressed in his own words: "We are lords-paramount of India, and our policy is to acquire as direct a dominion over the territories in possession of the native princes as we already hold over the other half of India." Such a principle as this could only conduct in the vast majority of cases to a course of direct annexation let the ruler begin by disavowing it as he will. In the Punjaub the annexation was provoked in the beginning, as so many such retributions have been in India, by the murder of some of our officers, sanctioned, if not actually ordered, by a native prince. Lord Dalhousie marched a force into the Punjaub. This land, the "land of the five waters," lies at the gateway of Hindostan, and was peopled by Mussulmans, Hindoos, and Sikhs, the latter a new sect of reformed Hindoos. We found arrayed against us not only the Sikhs but our old enemies the Afghans. Lord Gough was in command of our forces. He fought rashly and disastrously the famous battle of



Chillianwallah. The plain truth may as well be spoken out without periphrasis: he was defeated. But before the outcry raised in India and in England over this calamity had begun to subside, he had wholly recovered our position and *prestige* by the complete defeat which he inflicted upon the enemy at Goojrat. Never was a victory more complete in itself or more promptly and effectively followed up. The Sikhs were crushed; the Afghans were driven in wild rout back across their savage passes; and Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjaub. He presented as one token of his conquest the famous diamond, the Koh-i-Noor, surrendered in evidence of submission by the Maharajah of Lahore, to the Crown of England.

Lord Dalhousie annexed Oudh on the ground that the East India Company had bound themselves to defend the sovereigns of Oudh against foreign and domestic enemies on condition that the State should be governed in such a manner as to render the lives and property of its population safe; and that while the Company performed their part of the contract, the King of Oudh so governed his dominions as to make his rule a curse to his own people, and to all neighbouring territories. Other excuses or justifications there were of course in the case of each other annexation; and we shall yet hear some more of what came of the annexation of Sattara and Jhansi. If, however, each of these acts of policy were not only justifiable but actually inevitable, none the less must a succession of such acts produce a profound emotion among the races in whose midst they were accomplished. Lord Dalhousie wanted one quality of a truly great man; he lacked imagination. He had not that dramatic instinct, that fine sympathetic insight, by which a statesman is enabled to understand the feelings of races and men differing wholly in education, habits, and principles from himself. He appeared to be under the impression that when once a ruler had established among whatever foreign people a system of government or of society better than that which he found existing there, he might count on obtaining their instant appreciation of his work, and their gratefulness for

it. The Sovereign of Oudh was undoubtedly a very bad ruler. His governing system, if it ought to be dignified by such a name, was a combination of anarchy and robbery. The chiefs of Oudh were reivers and bandits; the king was the head reiver and bandit. But human nature, even in the west, is not so constituted as to render a population always and at once grateful to any powerful stranger who uproots their old and bad systems, and imposes a better on them by force of arms. "A tyrant, but our masters then were still at least our countrymen," is the faithful expression of a sentiment which had embarrassed energetic reformers before the days of Lord Dalhousie. The populations of India became stricken with alarm as they saw their native princes thus successively dethroned. The subversion of thrones, the annexation of states, seemed to them naturally enough to form part of that vast scheme for rooting out all the religions and systems of India, concerning which so many vague forebodings had darkly warned the land. Many of our Sepoys came from Oudh and other annexed territories, and little reason as they might have had for any personal attachment to the subverted dynasties, they yet felt that national resentment which any manner of foreign intervention is almost certain to provoke.

There were peculiar reasons too why, if religious and political distrust did prevail, the moment of Lord Canning's accession to the supreme authority in India should seem inviting and favourable for schemes of sedition. The Afghan war had told the Sepoy that British troops are not absolutely invincible in battle. The impression produced almost everywhere in India by the Crimean war was a conviction that the strength of England was on the wane. The stories of our disasters in the Crimea had gone abroad, adorned with immense exaggerations, among all the native populations of Hindostan. Any successes that the Russians had had during the war were in Asia, and these naturally impressed the Asiatic mind more than the victories of France and England which were won farther off. Intelligent and quick-witted Mahomedans and Hindoos talked with Englishmen, English officers in

India, and heard from them the accounts of the manner in which our system had broken down in the Crimea, of the blunders of our Government, and the shortcomings of our leaders. They entirely misinterpreted the significance of the stories that were so freely told. The Englishmen who spoke of our failures talked of them as the provoking and inexcusable blunders of departments and individuals; the Asiatics who greedily listened were convinced that they heard the acknowledgment of a national collapse. The Englishmen were so confident in the strength and resources<sup>a</sup> of their country, that it did not even occur to them to think that anybody on earth could have a doubt on the subject. It was as if a millionaire were to complain to some one in a foreign country that the neglect and blunder of a servant had sent his remittances to some wrong place, and left him for the moment without money enough to pay his hotel bill, and the listener were to accept this as a genuine announcement of approaching bankruptcy. The Sepoy saw that the English force in Northern India was very small; and he really believed that it was small because England had no more men to send there. He was as ignorant as a child about everything which he had not seen with his own eyes; and he knew absolutely nothing about the strength, the population, and the resources of England. In his mind Russia was the great rising and conquering country; England was sinking into decay; her star waning before the strong glare of the portentous northern light.

Other impulses too there were to make sedition believe that its opportunity had come. Lord Canning had hardly assumed office as Governor-General of India, when the dispute occurred between the British and Chinese authorities at Canton, and a war was imminent between India and China. Troops were sent, shortly after from England to China; and although none were taken from India yet it was well known among the native populations that England had an Asiatic war on her hands. Almost at the same moment war was declared against Persia by proclamation of the Governor-General at Calcutta, in consequence of the Shah having marched an army into

Herat and besieged it, in violation of a treaty with Great Britain made in 1853. A body of troops was sent from Bombay to the Persian Gulf, and shortly after General Outram left Bombay with additional troops, as Commander-in-Chief of the field force in Persia. Therefore, in the opening days of 1857, it was known among the native populations of India that the East India Company was at war with Persia and that England had on her hands a quarrel with China. At this time the number of native soldiers in the employment of England throughout Northern India was about one hundred and twenty thousand, while the European soldiers numbered only some twenty-two thousand. The native army of the three Presidencies taken together was nearly three hundred thousand, while the Europeans were but forty-three thousand, of whom some five thousand had just been told off for duty in Persia. It must be owned that, given the existence of a seditious spirit, it would have been hardly possible for it to find conditions more seemingly favourable and tempting. To many a temper of sullen discontent the appointed and fateful hour must have seemed to be at hand.

There can be no doubt that a conspiracy for the subversion of the English government in India was afoot during the early days of 1857, and possibly for long before. The story of the mysterious *chupatties* is well known. The *chupatties* are small cakes of unleavened bread, "bannocks of salt and dough," they have been termed; and they were found to be distributed with amazing rapidity and precision of system at one time throughout the native villages of the north and north-west. A native messenger brought two of these mysterious cakes to the watchman or headman of a village, and bade him to have others prepared like them, and to pass them on to another place. The token has been well described as the fiery cross of India, although it would not appear that its significance was as direct and precise as that of the famous Highland war-signal. It is curious how varying and unsatisfactory is the evidence about the meaning of these *chupatties*. According to the positive declaration of some

witnesses, the sending of such a token had never been a custom, either Mahomedan or Hindoo, in India. Some witnesses believed that the chupatties were regarded as spells to avert some impending calamity. Others said the native population looked on them as having been sent round by the Government itself as a sign that in future all would be compelled to eat the same food as the Christians ate. Others again said the intention was to make this known, but to make it known on the part of the seditious, in order that the people might be prepared to resist the plans of the English. But there could be no doubt that the chupatties conveyed a warning to all who received them that something strange was about to happen, and bade them to be prepared for whatever might befall. One fact alone conclusively proves that the signal given had a special reference to impending events connected with British rule in India. In no instance were they distributed among the populations of still-existing native States. They were only sent among the villages over which English rule extended. To the quick suspicious mind of the Asiatic a breath of warning-may be as powerful as the crash of an alarm-bell or the sound of a trumpet. It may be, as some authorities would have us to believe, that the panic about the greased cartridges disconcerted, instead of bringing to a climax, the projects of sedition.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE CENTENARY OF PLASSEY

THE news of the outbreak at Meerut, and the proclamation in Delhi, broke upon Calcutta with the shock of a thunder-clap. Yet it was not wholly a shock of surprise. For some time there had been vague anticipations of some impending danger. There was alarm in the air. There had long been a prophecy known to India, that the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey would

see the end of English rule in Hindostan; and now the hundredth anniversary was near. There is a fine passage in Sir Henry Taylor's "Philip van Artevelde," in which Van Ryk says to the hero of the drama—

If you mark, my Lord,  
Mostly a rumour of such things precedes  
The certain tidings ;

and Philip musingly answers—

It is strange—yet true  
That doubtful knowledge travels with a speed  
Miraculous, which certain cannot match.  
I know not why, when this or that has chanced,  
The smoke outruns the flash ; but so it is.

The smoke had apparently outrun the flash in many parts of India during this eventful season. Calcutta heard the news of what had happened with wild alarm and horror, but hardly with much surprise.

For one or two days Calcutta was a prey to mere panic. The alarm was greatly increased by the fact that the dethroned King of Oudh was established near to the city. At Garden Reach, a few miles down the Hooghly, the dispossessed king was living. There he lived for many years after, with his host of dependants and hangers-on round him. A picturesque writer lately described the "grotesque structures" in which the old man, with his mania for building, "quarters not only his people but his menagerie." "Tower after tower rises high above the lower buildings, on the top of each of which, comfortably quartered in a spacious den, abides a huge Bengal tiger, whose stripes glisten in the sun, in the sight of the passer-by on the river. He owns vast flocks of trained pigeons, which fly or alight at the word of command—wild but not unmusical shouts—of coolies stationed on the housetops, who appear to direct their motions by the waving of long bamboos." The inhabitants of Calcutta, when the news of the Mutiny came, were convinced that the King of Oudh harboured close to their city companions more dangerous than pigeons, or even than Bengal tigers.

They were sure that the place was the head-quarters of rebellion, and were expecting the moment when, from the residence at Garden Reach, an organised army of murderers was to be sent forth to capture and destroy the ill-fated city, and to make its streets run with the blood of its massacred inhabitants. Lord Canning took the prudent course of having the king, with his prime minister, removed to the Governor-General's own residence within the precincts of Fort William.

There is no recklessness, no cruelty, like the cruelty and the recklessness of panic. Perhaps there is hardly any panic so demoralising in its effects as that which seizes the unwarlike members of a ruling race set down in the midst of overwhelming numbers of the subject populations, at a moment when the cry goes abroad that the subjected are rising in rebellion. Fortunately there was at the head of affairs in India a man with a cool head, a quiet, firm will, and a courage that never faltered. If ever the crisis found the man, Lord Canning was the man called for by that crisis in India. He had all the divining genius of the true statesman; the man who can rise to the height of some unexpected and new emergency; and he had the cool courage of a practised conqueror. The greatest trial to which a ruler can be subjected is to be called upon at a moment's notice to deal with events and conditions for which there is no precedent. The second-class statesman, the official statesman, if we may use such an expression, collapses under such a trial. The man of genius finds it his opportunity, and makes his own of it. Lord Canning thus found his opportunity in the Indian Mutiny. Among all the distracting counsels and wild stories poured in upon him from every side, he kept his mind clear. He never gave way either to anger or to alarm. If he ever showed a little impatience, it was only where panic would too openly have proclaimed itself by counsels of wholesale cruelty. He could not, perhaps, always conceal from frightened people the fact that he rather despised their terrors. Throughout the whole of that excited period there were few names, even among the chiefs of rebellion, on which fiercer denunciation was

showered by Englishmen than the name of Lord Canning. Because he would not listen to the bloodthirsty clamours of mere frenzy, he was nicknamed "Clemency Canning," as if clemency were an attribute of which a man ought to be ashamed. Indeed, for some time people wrote and spoke, not merely in India but in England, as if clemency were a thing to be reprobated, like treason or crime. Every allowance must be made for the unparalleled excitement of such a time, and in especial for the manner in which the elementary passions of manhood were inflamed by the stories, happily not true, of the wholesale dishonour and barbarous mutilation of women. But when the fullest allowance has been made for all this, it must be said by any one looking back on that painful time, that some of the public instructors of England betrayed a fury and ferocity which no conditions can excuse on the part of civilised and Christian men who have time to reflect before they write or speak. The advices which some English journals showered upon the Government, the army, and all concerned in repressing the Mutiny, might more fittingly have come from some of the heroes of the "Spanish Fury." Nay, the Spanish Fury itself was, in express words, held up to the English army as an example for them to imitate. An English paper, of high and well-earned authority, distinctly declared that such mercy as Alva showed the Netherlands was the mercy that English soldiers must show to the rebellious regions of India. There was for a while but little talk of repression. Every one in England well knew that the rebellion would be repressed. It has to be remembered, to the credit of England's national courage and resolve, that not at the worst moment of the crisis did it seem to have occurred to any Englishman that there was the slightest possibility of the rebellion being allowed to succeed. It is painful to have to remember that the talk was not of repression, but of revenge. Public speakers and writers were shrieking out for the vengeance which must be inflicted on India when the rebellion had been put down. For a while it seemed a question of patriotism which would propose the most savage and sanguinary measures of revenge. We



shall see farther on that one distinguished English officer was clamorous to have powers given to him to impale, to burn alive, and to flay mutineers who had taken part in the murder of English women. Mr. Disraeli, to do him justice, raised his voice in remonstrance against the wild passions of the hour, even when these passions were strongest and most general. He declared that if such a temper were encouraged we ought to take down from our altars the images of Christ and raise the statue of Moloch there; and he protested against making Nana Sahib, of whom we shall hear more, the model for the conduct of a British officer. Mr. Disraeli did, indeed, at a later period, show an inclination to back out of this courageous and honourable expression of opinion, but it stands, at all events, to the credit of his first impulse that he could venture, at such a time, to talk of morality, mercy, and Christianity.

If people were so carried away in England, where the danger was far remote, we can easily imagine what were the fears and passions roused in India, where the terror was or might be at the door of every one. Lord Canning was gravely embarrassed by the wild urgencies and counsels of distracted Englishmen, who were furious with him because he even thought of distinguishing friend from foe where native races were concerned. He bore himself with perfect calmness; listened to everything that any one had to say, where time gave him any chance of doing so, read as far as possible all the myriad communications poured in upon him, regarded no suggestion as unworthy of consideration, but made his own resolves and his own judgment the final arbiter. He was greatly assisted and encouraged in his counsels by his brave and noble wife, who proved herself in every way worthy to be the help-mate of such a man at such a crisis. He did not for a moment underestimate the danger; but neither did he exaggerate its importance. He never allowed it to master him. He looked upon it with the quiet, resolute eye of one who is determined to be the conqueror in the struggle

Lord Canning saw that the one important thing was

to strike at Delhi, which had proclaimed itself the headquarters of the rebellion. He knew that English troops were on their way to China for the purpose of wreaking the wrongs of English subjects there, and he took on his own responsibility the bold step of intercepting them, and calling them to the work of helping to put down the Mutiny in India. The dispute with China he thought could well afford to wait, but with the Mutiny it must be now or never. India could not wait for reinforcements brought all the way from England. In Scott's "Betrothed," the soldier of the knight who owns the frontier castle encourages him, when the Welsh are about to attack, by the assurance that the forces of the constable of Chester will soon come to his aid, and that with these reinforcements they will send the Welsh dragon-flag flying from the field. The knight sadly answers that it must fly from the field before the reinforcements arrive, "or it will fly over all our dead bodies." Thus felt Lord Canning when he thought of the strong arms that England could send to his assistance. He knew well enough, as well as the wildest alarmist could know, that the rebel flag must be forced to fly from some field before that help came, or it would fly over the dead bodies of those who then represented English authority in India. He had, therefore, no hesitation in appealing to Lord Elgin, the Envoy in charge of the Chinese expedition, to stop the troops that were on their way to China, and lend them to the service of India at such a need. Lord Elgin had the courage and the wisdom to assent to the appeal at once. Fortune, too, was favourable to Canning in more ways than one. The Persian war was of short duration. Sir James Outram was soon victorious, and the Persians sued for a peace. The Treaty of Peace was signed at Paris in March 1857, and was arranged so quickly that Outram inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persians after the treaty was signed, but before the news of its signature had time to reach the seat of war. Outram, therefore, and his gallant companions, Colonel Jacob and Colonel Havelock, were able to lend their invaluable services to the Governor-General of India. Most important for Lord Canning's

purposes was the manner in which the affairs of the Punjaub were managed at this crisis. The Punjaub was under the administration of one of the ablest public servants India has ever had—Sir John, afterwards Lord Lawrence. John Lawrence had from his youth been in the Civil Service of the East India Company; and when Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjaub, he made Lawrence and his soldier-brother—the gallant Sir Henry Lawrence—two out of a board of three for the administration of the affairs of the newly-acquired province. Afterwards Sir John Lawrence was named the Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub, and by the promptitude and energy of himself and his subordinates, the province was completely saved for English rule at the outbreak of the Mutiny. Fortunately, the electric telegraph extended from Calcutta to Lahore, the chief city of the Punjaub. On May 11 the news of the outbreak at Meerut was brought to the authorities at Lahore. As it happened, Sir John Lawrence was then away at Rawul Pindiee, in the Upper Punjaub; but Mr. Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner at Lahore, was invested with plenary power, and he showed that he could use it to advantage. Meean Meer is a large military cantonment five or six miles from Lahore, and there were then some four thousand native troops there, with only about thirteen hundred Europeans of the Queen's and the Company's service. There was no time to be lost. If the spirit of mutiny were to spread, the condition of things in the Punjaub would be desperate; but what did the condition of things in the Punjaub involve? The possible loss of a province? Something far greater than that. It meant the possibility of a momentary collapse of all British authority in India. For if any one will take the trouble to cast a glance at a map of India, he will see that the Punjaub is so placed as to become a basis of operations for the precise military movements which every experienced eye then saw to be necessary for the saving of our Indian Empire. The candle would have been burning at both ends, so far as regards the North-West Provinces, if the Punjaub had gone with Delhi and Lucknow. While the Punjaub held firm it was like a barrier raised at one side

of the rebellious movement, not merely preventing it from going any farther in that direction, but keeping it pent up until the moment came when the blow from the other direction could fall upon it. The first thing to be done to strike effectively at the rebellion was to make an attack on Delhi; and the possession of the Punjaub was of inestimable advantage to the authorities for that purpose. It will be seen, then, that the moment was critical for those to whose hands the administration of the great new province had been entrusted. There was no actual reason to assume that the Sepoys in Meean Meer intended to join the rebellion. There would be a certain danger of converting them into rebels if any rash movement were to be made for the purpose of guarding against treachery on their part. Either way was a serious responsibility, a momentous risk. The authorities soon made up their minds. Any risk would be better than that of leaving it in the power of the native troops to join the rebellion. A ball and supper were to be given at Lahore that night. To avoid creating any alarm it was arranged that the entertainments should take place. During the dancing and feasting Mr. Montgomery held a council of the leading officials of Lahore, civil and military, and it was resolved at once to disarm the native troops. A parade was ordered for daybreak at Meean Meer; and on the parade-ground an order was given for a military movement which brought the heads of four columns of the native troops in front of twelve guns charged with grape, the artillerymen with their port-fires lighted, and the soldiers of one of the Queen's regiments standing behind with loaded muskets. A command was given to the Sepoys to pile arms. They had immediate death before them if they disobeyed. They stood literally at the cannon's mouth. They piled their arms, which were borne away at once in carts by European soldiers, and all chances of a rebellious movement were over in that province, and the Punjaub was saved. Something of the same kind was done at Mooltan, in the Lower Punjaub, later on; and the province, thus assured to English civil and military authority, became a basis for some of the most important operations by which

the Mutiny was crushed, and the sceptre of India restored to the Queen

Within little more than a fortnight from the occupation of Delhi by the rebels, the British forces under General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, were advancing on that city. The commander did not live to conduct any of the operations. He died of cholera almost at the beginning of the march. He had lived long enough to come in for much sharp censure. The temper of the time both in England and in India expected men to work by witchcraft rather than wit, and Anson was furiously denounced by some of the principal English journals because he did not recapture Delhi without having even to march an army to the neighbourhood of the city. He was described as "a holiday soldier who had never seen service either in peace or in war." His appointment was denounced as "a shameless job," and a tribute altogether to "the claims of family and personal acquaintance." We cannot venture now to criticise the mode of General Anson's appointment; and he had not time to show whether he was any better than a holiday soldier. But it would appear that Lord Canning had no poor opinion of his capacity, and was particularly impressed by his coolness and command of temper. He died, however, at the very outset of his march; and we only refer now to the severe attacks which were made upon him to illustrate the temper of the nation, and the manner in which it delighted to hear itself addressed. We are always rebuking other nations for their impatience and fretfulness under difficulties. It is a lesson of no slight importance for us to be reminded that when the hour of strain and pressure comes we are found to be in most ways very like our neighbours. •

The siege of Delhi proved long and difficult. Another general died, another had to give up his command, before the city was recaptured. It was justly considered by Lord Canning and by all the authorities as of the utmost importance that Delhi should be taken before the arrival of great reinforcements from home. Meanwhile the rebellion was breaking out at new points almost everywhere in these northern and north-western regions. On May 30 the

Mutiny declared itself at Lucknow. Sir Henry Lawrence was governor of Oudh. He endeavoured to drive the rebels from the place, but the numbers of the mutineers were overwhelming. He had under his command, too, a force partly made up of native troops, and some of these deserted him in the battle. He had to retreat and to fortify the Residency at Lucknow, and remove all the Europeans, men, women, and children thither, and patiently stand a siege. Lawrence himself had not long to endure the siege. On July 2 he had been up with the dawn, and after a great amount of work he lay on a sofa, not, as it has been well said, to rest, but to transact business in a recumbent position. His nephew and another officer were with him. Suddenly a great crash was heard, and the room was filled with smoke and dust. One of his companions was flung to the ground. A shell had burst. When there was silence the officer who had been flung down called out, "Sir Henry, are you hurt?" At first there was no answer. Then a weak voice was heard to reply in just the words that Browning has put into the mouth of the gallant French lad similarly questioned by the great Napoleon. "I am killed," was the answer that came faintly but firmly from Sir Henry Lawrence's lips. The shell had wounded him in the thigh so fearfully as to leave surgery no chance of doing anything for his relief. On the morning of July 4 he died calmly and in perfect submission to the will of Providence. He had made all possible arrangements for his successor, and for the work to be done. He desired that on his tomb should be engraven merely the words, "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty." The epitaph was a simple, truthful summing up of a simple, truthful career. The man, however, was greater than the career. Lawrence had not opportunity to show in actual result the greatness of spirit that was in him. The immense influence he exercised over all who came within his reach bears testimony to his strength and nobleness of character better than any of the mere successes which his biographer can record. He was full of sympathy. His soul was alive to the noblest and purest aspirations. "It is the due admixture of romance and reality," he was himself accustomed to say,

"that best carries a man through life." No professional teacher or philosopher ever spoke a truer sentence. As one of his many admirers says of him—"What he said and wrote, he did, or rather he was." Let the bitterest enemy of England write the history of her rule in India, and set down as against her every wrong that was done in her name, from those which Burke denounced to those which the Madras Commission exposed ; he will have to say that men, many men, like Henry Lawrence, lived and died devoted to the cause of that rule, and the world will take account of the admission.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### CAWNPORE

DURING the later days of Sir Henry Lawrence's life it had another trouble added to it by the appeals which were made to him from Cawnpore for a help which he could not give. The story of Cawnpore is by far the most profound and tragic in its interest of all the chapters that make up the history of the Indian Mutiny. The city of Cawnpore stands in the Doab, a peninsula between the Ganges and the Jumna, and is built on the south bank of the Ganges, there nearly a quarter of a mile broad in the dry season, and more than a mile across when swelled by the rains. By a treaty made in 1775 the East India Company engaged to maintain a force in Cawnpore for the defence of Oudh, and the revenues of an extensive district of country were appropriated to the maintenance of troops quartered there. In 1801, for some of the various reasons impelling similar transactions in India, Lord Wellesley "closed the mortgage," as Mr. Trevelyan puts it in his interesting and really valuable little book "Cawnpore," and the territory lapsed into the possession of the Company. From that time it took rank as one of our first-class military stations. When Oudh was annexed to our dominions there was an additional reason for maintaining a strong military force at Cawnpore.

The city commanded the bridge over which passed the high road to Lucknow, the capital of our new province. The distance from Cawnpore to Lucknow is about fifty miles as the bird flies.

At the time when the Mutiny broke out in Meerut there were some 3000 native soldiers in Cawnpore, consisting of two regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and a company of artillerymen. There were about three hundred officers and soldiers of English birth. The European or Eurasian population, including women and children, numbered about one thousand. These consisted of the officials, the railway people, some merchants and shopkeepers and their families. The native town had about sixty thousand inhabitants. The garrison was under the command of Sir Hugh Wheeler, among the oldest of an old school of Bengal officers. Sir Hugh Wheeler was some seventy-five years of age at the time when the events occurred which we have now to describe.

The revolt was looked for at Cawnpore from the moment when the news came of the rising at Meerut; and it was not long expected before it came. Sir Hugh Wheeler applied to Sir Henry Lawrence for help; Lawrence of course could not spare a man. Then Sir Hugh Wheeler remembered that he had a neighbour whom he believed to be friendly, despite of very recent warnings from Sir Henry Lawrence and others to the contrary. He called this neighbour to his assistance, and his invitation was promptly answered. The Nana Sahib came with two guns and some three hundred men to lend a helping hand to the English commander.

The Nana Sahib resided at Bithoor, a small town twelve miles up the river from Cawnpore. He represented a grievance. Bajee Rao, Peishwa of Poonah, was the last prince of one of the great Mahratta dynasties. The East India Company believed him guilty of treachery against them, of bad government of his dominions, and so forth; and they found a reason for dethroning him. He was assigned, however, a residence in Bithoor and a large pension. He had no children, and he adopted as his heir Seereek Dhoondoo Punth, the man who will be known to



all time by the infamous name of Nana Sahib. It seems almost superfluous to say, that according to Hindoo belief it is needful for a man's eternal welfare that he leave a son behind him to perform duly his funeral rites; and that the adoption of a son is recognised as in every sense conferring on the adopted all the rights that a child of the blood could have. Bajee died in 1851, and Nana Sahib claimed to succeed to all his possessions. Lord Dalhousie had shown in many instances a strangely unwise disregard of the principle of adoption. The claim of the Nana to the pension was disallowed. Nana Sahib sent a confidential agent to London to push his claim there. This man was a clever and handsome young Mahomedan who had at one time been a servant in an Anglo-Indian family, and had picked up a knowledge of French and English. His name was Azimoolah Khan. This emissary visited London in 1854, and became a lion of the fashionable season. As Hajji Baba, the barber's son, in the once popular story, was taken for a prince in London and treated accordingly, so the promoted footman, Azimoolah Khan, was welcomed as a man of princely rank in our West-End society. He did not succeed in winning over the Government to take any notice of the claims of his master, but being very handsome and of sleek and alluring manners, he became a favourite in the drawing-rooms of the metropolis, and was under the impression that an unlimited number of Englishwomen of rank were dying with love for him. On his way home he visited Constantinople and the Crimea. It was then a dark hour for the fortunes of England in the Crimea, and Azimoolah Khan swallowed with glad and greedy ear all the alarmist rumours that were afloat in Stamboul about the decay of England's strength and the impending domination of Russian power over Europe and Asia. In the Crimea itself Azimoolah had some opportunity of seeing how the campaign was going, and it is not surprising that with his prepossessions and his hopes, he interpreted everything he saw as a threatened disaster for the arms of England. Mr. Russell, the correspondent of the *Times*, made the acquaintance of Azimoolah Khan in Constantinople and afterwards met him in the Crimea,

and has borne testimony to the fact, that along with the young Mahomedan's boasts of his conquests of English-women were mingled a good many grave and sinister predictions as to the prospects of England's empire. The Western visit of this man was not an event without important consequences. He doubtless reported to his master that the strength of England was on the wane ; and while stimulating his hatred and revenge, stimulated also his confidence in the chances of an effort to gratify both. Azimoolah Khan did afterwards, as it will be seen, make some grim and genuine havoc among English ladies. The most bloodthirsty massacre of the whole Mutiny is with good reason ascribed to his instigation. With Azimoolah Khan's mission and its results ended the hopes of Nana Sahib for the success of his claims, and began, we may presume, his resolve to be revenged.

Nana Sahib, although his claim on the English Government was not allowed, was still rich. He had the large private property of the man who had adopted him, and he had the residence at Bithoor. He kept up a sort of princely state. He never visited Cawnpore ; the reason being, it is believed, that he would not have been received there with princely honours. But he was especially lavish of his attentions to English visitors, and his invitations went far and wide among the military and civil servants of the Crown and the Company. He cultivated the society of English men and women ; he showered his civilities upon them. He did not speak or even understand English, but he took a great interest in English history, customs, and literature. He was luxurious in the most thoroughly Oriental fashion ; and Oriental luxury implies a great deal more than any experience of Western luxury would suggest. At the time with which we are dealing he was only about thirty-six years of age, but he was prematurely heavy and fat, and seemed to be as incapable of active exertion as of unkindly feeling. There can be little doubt that all this time he was a dissembler of more than common Eastern dissimulation. It appears almost certain that while he was lavishing his courtesies and kindnesses upon Englishmen without discrimination, his heart was burning with a hatred

to the whole British race. A sense of his wrongs had eaten him up. It is a painful thing to say, but it is necessary to the truth of this history, that his wrongs were genuine. He had been treated with injustice. According to all the recognised usages of his race and his religion, he had a claim indefeasible in justice to the succession which had been unfairly and unwisely denied to him.

It was to Nana Sahib, then, that poor old Sir Hugh Wheeler in the hour of his distress applied for assistance. Most gladly, we can well believe, did the Nana come. He established himself in Cawnpore with his guns and his soldiers. Sir Hugh Wheeler had taken refuge, when the Mutiny broke out, in an old military hospital with mud walls, scarcely four feet high, hastily thrown up around it, and a few guns of various calibre placed in position on the so-called entrenchments. Everything seemed to have been against our people in this hour of terror. Sir Hugh Wheeler might have chosen a far better refuge in the magazine, in a different quarter of Cawnpore; but it appeared destined that the mutineers should have this chance, too, as they had every other. The English commander selected his place in the worst position, and hardly capable of defence. Within his almost shadowy and certainly crumbling entrenchments were gathered about a thousand persons, of whom 465 were men of every age and profession. The married women and grown daughters were about 280; the children about the same number. Of the men there were probably 400 who could fight.

It can never be made quite clear whether Nana Sahib had in the beginning any idea of affecting to help the Englishmen. If any object of his could have been served by his assuming such a part for any given length of time, or until any particular moment arrived, he assuredly would not have been wanting in patient dissimulation. But almost as soon as his presence became known in Cawnpore he was surrounded by the mutineers, who insisted that he must make common cause with them and become one of their leaders. He put himself at their disposal. At first their idea was that he should lead them on to Delhi, the recognised centre of the revolt. But he was urged by some

of his advisers, and especially by Azimoolah Khan, not to allow all his personal pretensions to be lost in the cause of Delhi, and his individual influence to be absorbed into the court of the Grand Mogul. He was advised to make himself a great man in the first instance by conquering the country all round Cawnpore; and overcome by these persuasions and by the promptings of personal ambition, he prevailed upon the mutineers not to leave the city until they had first "scoured these English thence." The Nana therefore became the recognised chief of the Cawnpore movement. Let us do justice, even to Nana Sahib. It will be hard to say a word for him after this. Let us now observe that he gave notice to Sir Hugh Wheeler that if the entrenchments were not surrendered they would be instantly attacked. They were attacked. A general assault was made upon the miserable mud walls on June 12, but the resistance was heroic and the assault failed. It was after that assault that the garrison succeeded in sending a message to Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, craving for the aid which it was absolutely impossible for him to give.

From that time the fire of the mutineer army on the English entrenchments never ceased. Cawnpore was alive with all the ruffianism of the region. It became an Alsatia for the scoundrels and gaol-birds of the country round, and of the province of Oudh. All these scoundrels took their turn at the pleasant and comparatively safe amusement of keeping up the fire on the English people behind the mud walls. Whenever a regular attack was made the assailants invariably came to grief. The little garrison, thinning in numbers every day and almost every hour, held out with splendid obstinacy, and always sent those who assailed it scampering back—except of course for such assailants as perforce kept their ground by the persuasion of the English bullets. The little population of women and children behind the entrenchments had no roof to shelter them from the fierce Indian sun. They cowered under the scanty shadow of the little walls often at the imminent peril of the unceasing Sepoy bullets. The only water for their drinking was to be had from a single well,

at which the guns of the assailants were unceasingly levelled. To go to the well and draw water became the task of self-sacrificing heroes, who might with better chances of safety have led a forlorn hope. The water which the fainting women and children drank might have seemed to be reddened by blood; for only at the price of blood was it ever obtained. It may seem a trivial detail, but it will count for much in a history of the sufferings of delicately-nurtured Englishwomen, that from the beginning of the siege of the Cawnpore entrenchments to its tragic end, there was not, as Mr. Trevelyan puts it, "one spongeful of water" to be had for the purposes of personal cleanliness. The inmates of that ghastly garrison were dying like flies. One does not know which to call the greater; the suffering of the women or the bravery of the men.

The Nana was joined by a large body of the Oudh soldiers, believed to be among the best fighting men that India could produce. These made a grand assault on the entrenchments, and these, too, were driven back by the indomitable garrison, who were hourly diminishing in numbers, in food, in ammunition, in everything but courage and determination to fight. The repulse of the Oudh men made a deep impression on the mutineers. A conviction began to spread abroad that it was of no use attempting to conquer these terrible British sahibs; that as long as one of them was alive he would be as formidable as a wild beast in his lair. The Sepoys became unwilling to come too near to the low crumbling walls of the entrenchment. Those walls might have been leaped over as easily as that of Romulus; but of what avail to know that, when from behind them always came the fatal fire of the Englishmen? It was no longer easy to get the mutineers to attempt anything like an assault. They argued that when the Oudh men could do nothing it was hardly of any use for others to try. The English themselves began to show a perplexing kind of aggressive enterprise, and took to making little sallies in small numbers indeed, but with astonishing effect, on any bodies of Sepoys who happened to be anywhere near. Utterly, overwhelmingly, preposterously

outnumbered as the Englishmen were, there were moments when it began to seem almost possible that they might actually keep back their assailants until some English army could come to their assistance and take a terrible vengeance upon Cawnpore. Meanwhile the influence of the Nana began sensibly to wane. They who accept the responsibility of undertakings like his soon come to know that they hold their place only on condition of immediate success. Only great organisations, with roots of system firmly fixed, can afford to wait and to look over disappointment. Nana Sahib began to find that he could not take by assault those wretched entrenchments; and he could not wait to starve the garrison out. He therefore resolved to treat with the English. The terms, it is believed, were arranged by the advice and assistance of Tantia Topee, his lieutenant, and Azimoolah Khan, the favourite of English drawing-rooms. An offer was sent to the entrenchments, the terms of which are worthy of notice. "All those," it said, "who are in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, and who are willing to lay down their arms, shall receive a safe passage to Allahabad."

The terms had to be accepted. There was nothing else to be done. The English people were promised, during the course of the negotiations, sufficient supplies of food and boats to carry them to Allahabad, which was now once more in the possession of England. The relief was unspeakable for the survivors of that weary defence. The women, the children, the wounded, the sick, the dying, welcomed any terms of release. Not the faintest suspicion crossed any mind of the treachery that was awaiting them. How, indeed, could there be any such suspicion? Not for years and years had even Oriental warfare given example of such practice as that which Nana Sahib and the graceful and civilised Azimoolah Khan had now in preparation.

The time for the evacuation of the garrison came. The boats were in readiness on the Ganges. The long procession of men, women, and children passed slowly down; very slowly in some instances, because of the number of sick and wounded by which its progress was encumbered. Some of the chief among the Nana's counsellors took their

stand in a little temple on the margin of the river, to superintend the embarkation and the work that was to follow it. Nana Sahib himself was not there. It is understood that he purposely kept away; he preferred to hear of the deed when it was done. His faithful lieutenant, Tantia Topee, had given orders, it seems, that when a trumpet sounded, some work, for which he had arranged, should begin. The wounded and the women were got into the boats in the first instance. The officers and men were scrambling in afterwards. Suddenly the blast of a trumpet was heard. The boats were of the kind common on the rivers of India, covered with roofs of straw, and looking, as some accounts describe them, not unlike floating haystacks. The moment the bugle sounded, the straw of the boat-roofs blazed up, and the native rowers began to make precipitately for the shore. They had set fire to the thatch, and were now escaping from the flames they had purposely lighted up. At the same moment there came from both shores of the river thick showers of grapeshot and musketry. The banks of the Ganges seemed in an instant alive with shot, a very rain of bullets poured in upon the devoted inmates of the boats. To add to the horrors of the moment, if, indeed, it needed any addition, nearly all the boats stuck fast in mudbanks, and the occupants became fixed targets for the fire of their enemies. Only three of the boats floated. Two of these drifted to the Oudh shore, and those on board them were killed at once. The third floated farther along with the stream, reserved for further adventures and horrors. The firing ceased when Tantia Topee and his confederates thought that enough had been done; and the women and children who were still alive were brought ashore and carried in forlorn procession back again through the town where they had suffered so much, and which they had hoped that they were leaving for ever. They were about 125 in number, women and children. Some of them were wounded. There were a few well-disposed natives who saw them and were sorry for them; who had perhaps served them, and experienced their kindness in other days, and who now had some grateful memory of it, which they dared not express by any open profession

of sympathy. Certain of these afterwards described the English ladies as they saw them pass. They were be-draggled and dishevelled, these poor English women; their clothes were in tatters; some of them were wounded, and the blood was trickling from their feet and legs. They were carried to a place called the Savada House, a large building, once a charitable institution bearing the name of Salvador, which had been softened into Savada by Asiatic pronunciation.

On board the one boat which had floated with the stream were more than a hundred persons. The boat was attacked by a constant fire from both banks as it drifted along. At length a party of some twelve men, or thereabouts, landed with the bold object of attacking their assailants and driving them back. In their absence the boat was captured by some of the rebel gangs, and the women and the wounded were brought back to Cawnpore. Some sixty men, twenty-five women, and four children were thus recaptured. The men were immediately shot. It may be said at once, that of the gallant little party who went ashore to attack the enemy, hand to hand, four finally escaped, after adventures so perilous and so extraordinary that a professional storyteller would hardly venture to make them part of a fictitious narrative.

The Nana had now a considerable number of English women in his hands. They were removed, after a while, from their first prison-house to a small building north of the canal; and between the native city and the Ganges. Here they were cooped up in the closest manner, except when some of them were taken out in the evening and set to the work of grinding corn for the use of their captors. Cholera and dysentery set in among these unhappy sufferers, and some eighteen women and seven children died. Let it be said for the credit of womanhood, that the royal widows, the relicts of the Nana's father by adoption, made many efforts to protect the captive Englishwomen, and even declared that they would throw themselves and their children from the palace windows if any harm were done to the prisoners. We have only to repeat here, that as a matter of fact no indignities, other than that of the



compulsory corn-grinding, were put upon the English ladies. They were doomed, one and all, to suffer death, but they were not, as at one time was believed in England, made to long for death as an escape from shame.

Meanwhile the prospects of the Nana and his rebellion were growing darker and darker. He must have begun to know by this time that he had no chance of establishing himself as a ruler anywhere in India. The English had not been swept out of the country with a rush. The first flood of the Mutiny had broken on their defences, and already the tide was falling. The Nana well knew it never would rise again to the same height in his day. The English were coming on. Neill had recaptured Allahabad, and cleared the country all round it of any traces of rebellion. Havelock was now moving forward from Allahabad towards Cawnpore, with six cannon and about a thousand English soldiers. Very small in point of numbers was that force when compared with that which Nana Sahib could even still rally round him ; but no one in India now knew better than Nana Sahib what extraordinary odds the English could afford to give with the certainty of winning. Havelock's march was a series of victories, although he was often in such difficulties that the slightest display of real generalship or even soldiership on the part of his opponents might have stopped his advance. He had one encounter with the lieutenant of the Nana, who had under his command nearly four thousand men and twelve guns, and Havelock won a complete victory in about ten minutes. He defeated in the same off-hand way various other chiefs of the Mutiny. He was almost at the gates of Cawnpore.

Then it appears to have occurred to the Nana, or to have been suggested to him, that it would be inconvenient to have his English captives recaptured by the enemy, their countrymen. It may be that in the utter failure of all his plans and hopes he was anxious to secure some satisfaction, to satiate his hatred in some way. It was intimated to the prisoners that they were to die. Among them were three or four men. These were called out and shot. Then some Sepoys were sent to the house where the women still

were, and ordered to fire volleys through the windows. This they did, but apparently without doing much harm. Some persons are of opinion, from such evidence as can be got, that the men purposely fired high above the level of the floor, to avoid killing any of the women and children. In the evening five men, two Hindoo peasants, two Mahomedan butchers, and one Mahomedan wearing the red uniform of the Nana's bodyguard, were sent up to the house, and entered it. Incessant shrieks were heard to come from that fearful house. The Mahomedan soldier came out to the door holding in his hand a sword-hilt from which the blade had been broken off, and he exchanged this now useless instrument for a weapon in proper condition. Not once but twice this performance took place. Evidently the task imposed on these men was hard work for the sword-blades. After a while the five men came out of the now quiet house and locked the doors behind them. During that time they had killed nearly all the English women and children. They had slaughtered them like beasts in the shambles. In the morning it appeared indeed that the work, however zealously undertaken, had not been quite thorough. The strongest arms and sharpest sabres sometimes fail to accomplish a long piece of work to perfect satisfaction. In the morning it would seem that some of the women, and certainly some of the children, were still alive; that is to say, were not dead. For the five men came then with several attendants to clear out the house of the captives. Their task was to tumble all the bodies into a dry well beyond some trees that grew near. A large crowd of idlers assembled to watch this operation. Then it was seen by some of the spectators that certain of the women and children were not yet quite dead. Of the children some were alive, and even tried to get away. But the same well awaited them all. Some witnesses were of opinion that the Nana's officials took the trouble to kill the still living before they tossed them down into the well; others do not think they stopped for any such work of humanity, but flung them down just as they came to hand, the quick and the dead together. At all events, they were all deposited in the well. Any of the

bodies that had clothes worth taking, were carefully stripped before being consigned to this open grave. When Cawnpore was afterwards taken by the English those who had to look down into that well saw a sight the like of which no man in modern days had ever seen elsewhere. No attempt shall be made to describe it here. When the house of the massacre itself was entered, its floors and its walls told with terrible plainness of the scene they had witnessed. The plaster of the walls was scored and seamed with sword-slashes low down and in the corners, as if the poor women had crouched down in their mortal fright with some wild hope of escaping the blows. The floor was strewn with scraps of dresses, women's faded ragged finery, frilling, underclothing, broken combs, shoes, and tresses of hair. There were some small and neatly severed curls of hair too which had fallen on the ground, but evidently had never been cut off by the rude weapon of a professional butcher. These doubtless were keepsakes that had been treasured to the last, parted with only when life and all were going. There was no inscription whatever on the walls when the house was first entered. Afterwards a story was told of words found written there by some English women telling of hideous wrong done to them, and bequeathing to their countrymen the task of revenge. This story created a terrible sensation in England, as was but natural, and aroused a furious thirst for vengeance. It was not true. Some such inscription did appear on the walls afterwards, but it is painful to have to say that it was a vulgar, and what would have been called in later times, a "sensational" forgery. Our countrywomen died without leaving behind them any record of a desire on their part for vengeance. We may be sure they had other thoughts and other hopes as they died. One or two scraps of paper were found which recorded deaths and such like interruptions of the monotony of imprisonment; but nothing more. The well of horrors has been filled up, and a memorial chapel surrounded by a garden built upon the spot. It was right to banish all trace of that hideous crime, and to replace the house and the well, as Mr. Trevelyan says, by "a fair garden and a graceful shrine."

Something, however, has still to be told of the Nana and his fortunes. He made one last stand against the victorious English in front of Cawnpore, and was completely defeated. He galloped into the city on a bleeding and exhausted horse; he fled thence to Bithoor, his residence. He had just time left, it is said, to order the murder of a separate captive, a woman who had previously been overlooked or purposely left behind. Then he took flight in the direction of the Nepaulese marches; and he soon disappears from history. Nothing of his fate was ever known. Many years afterwards England and India were treated to a momentary sensation by a story of the capture of Nana Sahib. But the man who was arrested proved to be an entirely different person; and indeed from the moment of his arrest few believed him to be the long-lost murderer of the English women. In days more superstitious than our own, popular faith would have found an easy explanation of the mystery which surrounded the close of Nana Sahib's career. He had done, it would have been said, the work of a fiend; and he had disappeared as a fiend would do when his task was accomplished.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### RECONQUEST

THE capture of Delhi was effected on September 20. The siege had been long and difficult; and for some time it did not seem to the general in command, Archdale Wilson, that the small force he had could with any hope of success attempt to carry the city by assault. Colonel Baird Smith, who was chief of the engineer department, urged the attempt strongly on him; and at length it was made, and made with success, though not without many moments when failure seemed inevitable. Brigadier-General Nicholson led the storming columns, and paid for his bravery and success the price of a gallant life. He was shot through the body, and died three days

after the English standard had been planted on the roof of the palace of the Moguls. Nicholson was one of the bravest and most capable officers whom the war produced. It is worthy of record as an evidence of the temper aroused even in men from whom better things might have been expected, that Nicholson strongly urged the passing of a law to authorise flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children in Delhi. He contended that "the idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening." He urged this view again and again, and deliberately argued it on grounds alike of policy and principle. The fact is recorded here not in mere disparagement of a brave soldier, but as an illustration of the manner in which the old elementary passions of man's untamed condition can return upon him in his pride of civilisation and culture, and make him their slave again.

The taking of Delhi was followed by an act over which, from that time to the present, a controversy has been arising at intervals. A young officer, Hodson, of "Hodson's Horse," was acting as chief of the Intelligence Department. He had once been in a civil charge in the Punjaub, and had been dismissed for arbitrary and high-handed conduct towards an influential chief of the district. He had been striving hard to distinguish himself, and to regain a path to success, and as the leader of the little force known as Hodson's Horse he had given evidence of remarkable military capacity. He was especially distinguished by an extraordinary blending of cool calculating craft and reckless daring. He knew exactly when to be cautious and when to risk everything on what to other eyes might have seemed a madman's throw. He now offered to General Wilson to capture the King and the Royal Family of Delhi. General Wilson gave him authority to make the attempt, but stipulated that the life of the king should be spared. By the help of native spies Hodson discovered that when Delhi was taken the king and his family had taken refuge in the tomb of the Emperor Hoomayoon, a structure which, with the buildings surrounding and belonging to it, constituted a sort of suburb in itself. Hodson

went boldly to this place with a few of his troopers. He found that the Royal Family of Delhi were surrounded there by a vast crowd of armed and to all appearance desperate adherents. This was one of the moments when Hodson's indomitable daring stood him in good stead. He called upon them all to lay down their arms at once; and the very audacity of the order made them suppose he had force at hand capable of compelling obedience. They threw down their arms, and the king surrendered himself to Hodson. Next day Hodson captured the three royal princes of Delhi. He tried, condemned, and executed them himself, and on the spot. That is to say, he treated them as rebels taken red-handed, and borrowing a carbine from one of his troopers, he shot them dead with his own hand. Their corpses half-naked were exposed for some days at one of the gates of Delhi. Hodson did the deed deliberately. Many days before he had a chance of doing it he wrote to a friend to say that if he got into the palace of Delhi, "the house of Timour will not be worth five minutes' purchase, I ween." On the day after the deed he wrote: "In twenty-four hours I disposed of the principal members of the House of Timour the Tartar. I am not cruel; but I confess that I do rejoice in the opportunity of ridding the earth of these ruffians." Sir J. W. Kaye, who comments on Hodson's deed with a just and manly severity, says: "I must aver without hesitation that the general feeling in England was one of profound grief not unmingled with detestation. I never heard the act approved; I never heard it even defended." Sir J. W. Kaye was more fortunate than the writer of this book, who has frequently heard it defended, justified, and glorified; and has a distinct impression that the more general tendency of public opinion in England at the time, was to regard Hodson's act as entirely patriotic and laudable. If in cool blood the deed could now be defended, it might be necessary to point out that there was no evidence whatever of the princes having taken any part in the massacre of Europeans in Delhi; that even if evidence to that effect were forthcoming, Hodson did not wait for or ask for it; and that the share taken by

the princes in an effort to restore the dynasty of their ancestor, however it might have justified some sternness of punishment on the part of the English Government, was not a crime of that order which is held in civilised warfare to put the life of its author at the mercy of any one who captures him when the struggle is all over, and the reign of law is safe. One cannot read the history of the Indian Mutiny without coming to this conclusion that in the minds of many Englishmen a temporary prostration of the moral sense took place, under the influence of which they came to regard the measure of the enemy's guilt as the standard for their right of retaliation, and to hold that if he had no conscience they were thereby released from the necessity of having any. As Mr. Disraeli put it, they were making Nana Sahib the model for the British officer to imitate. Hodson was killed not long after; we might well wish to be free to allow him to rest without censure in his untimely grave. He was a brave and clever soldier, but one who unfortunately allowed a fierce temper to "overcrow," as the Elizabethan writers would have put it, the better instincts of his nature, and the guidance of a cool judgment.

General Havelock made his way to the relief of Lucknow. Sir James Outram who had returned from Persia had been sent to Oudh with full instructions to act as Chief Commissioner. He had complete civil and military authority. Appearing on the scene armed with such powers, he would in the natural order of things have superseded Havelock, who had been fighting his way so brilliantly, in the face of a thousand dangers, to the relief of the beleaguered English in Lucknow. But Outram was not the man to rob a brave and successful comrade of the fruits of his toil and peril. Outram wrote to Havelock—"To you shall be left the glory of relieving Lucknow, for which you have already struggled so much. I shall accompany you only in my civil capacity as Commissioner, placing my military service at your disposal should you please, and serving under you as a volunteer." Havelock was enabled to continue his victorious march. He fought battle after battle against forces far superior in numbers to his own, and on Sep-

tember 25 he was able to relieve the besieged English at Lucknow. His coming, it can hardly be doubted, saved the women and children from such a massacre as that of Cawnpore; but Havelock had not the force that might have driven the rebels out of the field. His little army, although it had been reinforced by the coming of Sir James Outram, was yet entirely inadequate to the task which circumstances had imposed on it. The enemy soon recovered from any momentary panic into which they had been thrown by Havelock's coming, and renewed the siege; and if England had not been prepared to make greater efforts for the rescue of her imperilled people, it is but too probable that the troops whom Havelock brought to the relief of Lucknow would only have swelled the number of the victims. But in the meantime the stout soldier, Sir Colin Campbell, whom we have already heard of in the Crimean campaign, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Indian forces, and had arrived in India. He received, it was said, the announcement of the task assigned to him one afternoon in London, and before the evening he was on his way to the scene of his command. He arrived in Cawnpore on November 3, and he set out for Lucknow on the 9th. He had, however, to wait for reinforcements, and it was not until the 14th that he was able to attack. Even then he had under his command only some 5000 men, a force miserably inferior in number to that of the enemy; but in those days an English officer thought himself in good condition to attack if the foe did not outnumber him by more than four or five to one. A series of actions was fought by Sir Colin Campbell and his little force, attacking the enemy on the one side, who were attacked at the same time by the besieged garrison of the residency. On the morning of November 17 Outram and Havelock, with their staff officers, were able to join Campbell before the general action was over, and by the combined efforts of both forces the enemy was dislodged. Sir Colin Campbell resolved, however, that the residency must be evacuated; and accordingly on the 19th heavy batteries were opened against the enemy's position, as if for the purpose of assault, and under cover of this operation the women, the sick, and the wounded



were quietly removed to the Dilkoosha, a small palace in a park about five miles from the residency, which had been captured by Sir Colin Campbell on his way to attack the city. During some days following the garrison was quietly withdrawing to the Dilkoosha. By midnight of the 22nd, the whole garrison, without the loss of a single man, had left the residency. Two or three days more saw the troops established at Alumbagh, some four miles from the residency, in another direction from that of the Dilkoosha. Alumbagh is an isolated cluster of buildings, with grounds and enclosure to the south of Lucknow. The name of this place is memorable for ever in the history of the war. It was there that Havelock closed his glorious career. He was attacked with dysentery, and his frame, exhausted by the almost superhuman strain which he had put upon it during his long days and sleepless nights of battle and victory, could not long resist such an enemy. On November 24 Havelock died. The Queen created him a baronet, or rather affixed that honour to his name on the 27th of the same month, not knowing then that the soldier's time for struggle and for honour was over. The title was transferred to his son, the present Sir Henry Havelock, who had fought gallantly under his father's eyes. The fame of Havelock's exploits reached England only a little in advance of the news of his death. So many brilliant deeds had seldom in the history of our wars been crowded into days so few. All the fame of that glorious career was the work of some strenuous splendid weeks. Havelock's promotion had been slow. He had not much for which to thank the favour of his superiors. No family influence, no powerful patrons or friends had made his slow progress more easy. He was more than sixty when the mutiny broke out. He was born in April 1795; he was educated at the Charterhouse, London, where his grave, studious ways procured for him the nickname of "old phlos"—the schoolboy's "short" for "old philosopher." He went out to India in 1823, and served in the Burmese war of 1824, and the Sikh war of 1845. He was a man of grave and earnest character, a Baptist by religion, and strongly penetrated with a conviction that the religious spirit ought to pervade

and inform all the duties of military as well as civil life. By his earnestness and his example he succeeded in animating those whom he led with similar feelings; and "Havelock's saints" were well known through India by this distinctive appropriate title. "Havelock's saints" showed, whenever they had an opportunity, that they could fight as desperately as the most reckless sinners; and their commander found the fame flung in his way, across the path of his duty, which he never would have swerved one inch from that path to seek. Amid all the excitement of hope and fear, passion and panic, in England, there was time for the whole heart of the nation to feel pride in Havelock's career and sorrow for his untimely death. Untimely? Was it after all untimely? Since when has it not been held the crown of a great career that the hero dies at the moment of accomplished victory?

Sir Colin Campbell left General Outram in charge of Alumbagh for the purpose of keeping watch upon the movements of the insurgents who were still strong in the city of Lucknow. Sir Colin himself advanced towards Cawnpore, where he soon found that there was some serious work to be done. A large hostile force, composed chiefly of the revolted army of Scindia, the ruler of Gwalior, had been marching upon Cawnpore; and General Windham who held the command there had gone out to attack them. It fared with him, however, very much as it had done with Sir Henry Lawrence near Lucknow; he found the enemy far too strong for him; he was compelled to retreat, not without severe loss, to his entrenchments at Cawnpore, and the enemy occupied the city itself. Sir Colin Campbell attacked the rebels at one place; Sir Hope Grant attacked them at another, and Cawnpore was retaken. Sir Colin Campbell then turned his attention to the very important work of reconquering the entire city of Lucknow and dispersing the great body of rebels who were concentrated there. It was not until March 19, 1858, that Lucknow fell completely into the hands of the English. Our operations had been almost entirely by artillery, and had been conducted with consummate prudence as well as boldness, and our loss was therefore very small, while the

enemy suffered most severely. About 2000 of the rebels were killed in the final attack, and more than 100 of their guns were taken. Among our wounded were the gallant leader of the naval brigade, Sir William Peel, son of the great statesman; and among the killed was "Hodson, of Hodson's Horse," the executioner of the princes of Delhi. Sir William Peel died at Cawnpore shortly after, of small-pox, his death remarked and lamented even amid all the noble deaths of that eventful time. One name must not be forgotten among those who endured the siege of Lucknow. It is that of Dr. Brydon, whom we last saw as he appeared under the walls of Jellalabad, the one survivor come back to tell the tale of the disastrous retreat from Cabul. A gifted artist, Mrs. Butler, has lately painted that picture as no words could paint it. Dr. Brydon served through the Lucknow defence, and was specially named in the despatch of the Governor-General. "After passing through the Cabul campaign of 1841-42," the Governor-General says of Dr. Brydon, "he was included in the illustrious garrison who maintained the position in Jellalabad. He may now, as one of the heroes of Lucknow, claim to have witnessed and taken part in an achievement even more conspicuous, as an example of the invincible energy and enduring courage of British soldiers."

Practically, the reconquest of Lucknow was the final blow in the suppression of the great Bengal mutiny. The two centres of the movement were Delhi and Lucknow; and when these strongholds were once more in the hands of the English, rebellion in the land had well-nigh lost its sway. There was hardly, after that time, any rebel camp left to which it would have been worth carrying a flag of truce. Some episodes of the war were still worthy of notice. For example, the rebels seized Gwalior, the capital of the Maharajah Scindia, who escaped to Agra. The English had to attack the rebels, retake Gwalior, and restore Scindia. One of those who fought to the last on the rebels' side was the Ranee, or Princess of Jhansi, whose territory, as we have already seen, had been one of our annexations. She had flung all her energies into the rebellion, regarding it clearly as a rebellion and not as a mere mutiny. She

took the field with Nana Sahib and Tantia Topee. For months after the fall of Delhi, she contrived to baffle Sir Hugh Rose and the English. She led squadrons in the field. She fought with her own hand. She was engaged against us in the battle for the possession of Gwalior. In the uniform of a cavalry officer she led charge after charge, and she was killed among those who resisted to the last. Her body was found upon the field, scarred with wounds enough in the front to have done credit to any hero. Sir Hugh Rose paid her the well-deserved tribute which a generous conqueror is always glad to be able to offer. He said, in his general order, that "the best man upon the side of the enemy was the woman found dead, the Ranees of Jhansi."

The Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior had deserved well of the English Government. Under every temptation, every threat, and many profound perils from the rebellion, he had remained firm to his friendship. So, too, had Holkar, the Maharajah of the Indore territory. Both these princes were young when the mutiny broke out; some twenty-three years old, each of them; at a time of life, therefore, when ambition and enterprise might have been expected to tempt with fullest fascination. Holkar was actually believed, in the beginning, to have favoured the rebellion; he was deliberately accused of having taken part with it; there are, even still, those who would argue that he was its accomplice; so closely were his fortunes, to all appearance, bound up with the cause of the mutineers, and so natural did it seem that he should fail to hold out against them. But he disappointed all such expectations on the part of our enemies, and proved himself a faithful friend of England. The country owes much to those two princes, for the part they took at her hour of need; and she has not, we are glad to think, proved herself ungrateful.

The administration of Patna by Mr. William Tayler supplied an episode which is still discussed with something like partisan keenness. Patna is the Mahomedan capital of the region east of Benares, and the city was the headquarters of the chiefs of the fanatical, warlike Wahabis. Mr. Tayler was the Commissioner of the district; he sus-

pected that rebellion was being planned there, and he got the supposed religious leaders of it into his power by a stratagem something like that which the Duke of Alva employed to make Egmont his prisoner. Did the end justify the means? is the question still asked. Was there a rebellious plot; and if so, was it right to anticipate Oriental treachery by a stroke of more than Oriental craft? The episode was interesting; but it is too purely an episode to be discussed at any length in these pages.

It is not necessary to describe, with any minuteness of detail, the final spasms of the rebellion. Tantia Topee, the lieutenant of Nana Sahib, held out obstinately in the field for a long time, and after several defeats. He was at length completely hemmed in by the English, and was deserted by the remainder of his army. He was taken prisoner in April 1859, was tried for his share in the Cawnpore massacre, and was hanged like any vulgar criminal. The old King of Delhi was also put on trial, and being found guilty, was sentenced to transportation. He was sent to the Cape of Good Hope, but the colonists there refused to receive him, and this last of the line of the Grand Moguls had to go begging for a prison. He was finally carried to Rangoon in British Burmah. On December 20, 1858, Lord Clyde, who had been Sir Colin Campbell, announced to the Governor-General that "the campaign is at an end, there being no longer even the vestige of rebellion in the province of Oudh"; and that "the last remnant of the mutineers and insurgents have been hopelessly driven across the mountains which form the barrier between the kingdom of Nepaul and her Majesty's empire of Hindostan." On May 1, 1859, there was a public thanksgiving in England for the pacification of India.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## THE END OF "JOHN COMPANY"

WHILE these things were passing in India, it is needless to say that the public opinion of England was distracted by agitation and by opposing counsels. For a long time the condition of Indian affairs had been regarded in England with something like absolute indifference. India was, to the ordinary Englishman, a place where men used at one time to make large fortunes within a few years ; and where lately military and civil officers had to do hard work enough without much chance of becoming nabobs. In many circles it was thought of only as the hated country where one's daughter went with her husband, and from which she had, after a few years, to send back her children to England, because the climate of India was fatal to certain years of childhood. It was associated, in the minds of some, with tiger-hunting ; in the minds of others with Bishop Heber and missions to the heathen. Most persons had a vague knowledge that there had been an impeachment of Warren Hastings for something done by him in India, and that Burke had made great speeches about it. In his famous essay on Lord Clive, published only seventeen years before the Indian Mutiny, Lord Macaulay complained that while every schoolboy, as he put it in his favourite way, knew all about the Spanish conquests in the Americas, about Montezuma, and Cortes, and Pizzaro, very few even of cultivated English gentlemen knew anything whatever about the history of England's empire in India. In the House of Commons a debate on any question connected with India was as strictly an affair of experts as a discussion on some local gas or water bill. The House in general did not even affect to have any interest in it. The officials who had to do with Indian affairs ; the men on the Opposition benches who had held the same offices while their party was in power ; these, and two or three men who had been in India, and were set down as crotchety because they

professed any concern in its mode of government—such were the politicians who carried on an Indian debate, and who had the House all to themselves while the discussion lasted. The Indian Mutiny startled the public feeling of England out of this state of unhealthy languor. First came the passion and panic, the cry for blood, the wholesale executions, the blowing of rebels from guns; then came a certain degree of reaction, and some eminent Englishmen were found to express alarm at the very sanguinary methods of repression and of punishment that were in favour among most of our fellow-countrymen in India.

It was during this season of reaction that the famous discussions took place on Lord Canning's proclamation. On March 3, 1858, Lord Canning issued his memorable proclamation; memorable rather for the stir it created in England than for any great effect it produced in India. It was issued from Allahabad, whither the Governor-General had gone to be nearer to the seat of war. The proclamation was addressed to the chiefs of Oudh, and it announced that, with the exception of the lands then held by six loyal proprietors of the province, the proprietary right in the whole of the soil of Oudh was transferred to the British Government, which would dispose of it in such manner as might seem fitting. The disposal was indicated by the terms of the proclamation. To all chiefs and landholders who should at once surrender to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh it was promised that their lives should be spared, "provided that their hands are unstained by English blood murderously shed"; but it was stated that, "as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the conditions in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves upon the justice and mercy of the British Government." Read by the light of literalness, this proclamation unquestionably seemed to amount to an absolute confiscation of the whole soil of Oudh; for even the favoured landowners who were to retain their properties were given to understand that they retained them by the favour of the Crown and as a reward for their loyalty. This was the view taken of the Governor-General's act by one whose opinion was surely entitled to the highest

consideration from every one, Sir James Outram, Chief Commissioner of Oudh. Sir James Outram wrote at once to Lord Canning, pointing out that there were not a dozen landholders in Oudh who had not either themselves borne arms against us or assisted the rebels with men or money, and that, therefore, the effect of the proclamation would be to confiscate the entire proprietary right in the province and to make the chiefs and landlords desperate, and that the result would be a "guerilla war for the extirpation, root and branch, of this class of men, which will involve the loss of thousands of Europeans by battle, disease, and exposure." Lord Canning was not ready to admit, even in deference to such authority as that of Sir James Outram, that his policy would have any such effects. But he consented to insert in the proclamation a clause announcing that a liberal indulgence would be granted to those who should promptly come forward to aid in the restoration of order, and that "the Governor-General will be ready to view liberally the claims which they may thus acquire to a restitution of their former rights."

In truth, it was never the intention of Lord Canning to put in force any cruel and sweeping policy of confiscation. The whole tenor of his rule in India, the very reproaches that had been showered on him, the very nickname which his enemies had given him—that term of reproach that afterwards came to be a title of honour—might have suggested to the sharpest critic that it was not likely "Clemency Canning" was about to initiate a principle of merciless punishment for an entire class of men. Lord Canning had come to the conclusion that the English Government must start afresh in their dealings with Oudh. He felt that it would be impossible to deal with the chiefs and people of the province so lately annexed as if we were dealing with revolted Sepoys. He put aside any idea of imprisonment or transportation for mere rebellion, seeing that only in the conqueror's narrowest sense could men be accounted rebels because they had taken arms against a power which but a moment before had no claim whatever to their allegiance or their obedience. Nevertheless, Oudh was now a province of



the British Empire in Hindostan, and Lord Canning had only to consider what was to be done with it. He came to the conclusion that the necessary policy for all parties concerned was to make of the mutiny and the consequent reorganisation, an opportunity not for a wholesale confiscation of the land, but for a measure which should declare that the land was held under the power and right of the English Government. The principle of his policy was somewhat like that adopted by Lord Durham in Canada. It put aside the technical authority of law for the moment in order that a reign of genuine law might be inaugurated. It seized the power of a dictator over life and property, that the dictator might be able to restore peace and order at the least cost in loss and suffering to the province and the population whose affairs it was his task to administer.

But it may be freely admitted that on the face of it the proclamation of Lord Canning looked strangely despotic. Some of the most independent and liberal Englishmen took this view of it. Men who had supported Lord Canning through all the hours of clamour against him, felt compelled to express disapproval of what they understood to be his new policy. It so happened that Lord Ellenborough was then President of the Board of Control, and Lord Ellenborough was a man who always acted on impulse, and had a passion for fine phrases. He had a sincere love of justice, according to his lights; but he had a still stronger love for antithesis. Lord Ellenborough therefore had no sooner received a copy of Lord Canning's proclamation than he despatched upon his own responsibility a rattling condemnation of the whole proceeding. "Other conquerors," wrote the fiery and eloquent statesman, "when they have succeeded in overcoming resistance have excepted a few persons as still deserving of punishment, but have with a generous policy extended their clemency to the great body of the people. You have acted upon a different principle; you have reserved a few as deserving of special favour, and you have struck, with what they feel as the severest of punishments, the mass of the inhabitants of the country. We cannot

but think that the precedents from which you have departed will appear to have been conceived in a spirit of wisdom superior to that which appears in the precedent you have made." The style of this despatch was absolutely indefensible. A French Imperial prefect with a turn for eloquent letter-writing might fitly thus have admonished the erring *maire* of a village community ; but it was absurd language for a man like Lord Ellenborough to address to a statesman like Lord Canning, who had just succeeded in keeping the fabric of English government in India together during the most terrible trial ever imposed on it by fate. The question was taken up immediately in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Shaftesbury in the House of Lords moved a resolution declaring that the House regarded with regret and serious apprehension the sending of such a despatch "through the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors"—an almost obsolete piece of machinery, we may remark—and its publication ; and that such a course must prejudice our rule in India by weakening the authority of the Governor-General and encouraging the resistance of rebels still in arms. A similar motion was introduced by Mr. Cardwell in the House of Commons. In both Houses the arraignment of the Ministry proved a failure. Lord Ellenborough at once took upon himself the whole responsibility of an act which was undoubtedly all his own ; and he resigned his office. The resolution was therefore defeated in the House of Lords on a division, and had to be withdrawn in a rather ignominious manner in the House of Commons. Four nights of vehement debate were spent in the latter House. Opinion was strangely divided. Men like Mr. Bright and Sir James Graham condemned the proclamation and defended the action of the Government. The position of Mr. Cardwell and his supporters became particularly awkward, for they seemed after the resignation of Lord Ellenborough to be only trying to find partisan advantage in a further pressure upon the Government. The news that Sir James Outram had disapproved of the proclamation came while the debate was still going on, and added new strength to the cause of the Govern-

ment. It came out in the course of the discussion that Lord Canning had addressed a private letter to Mr. Vernon Smith, afterwards Lord Lyveden, Lord Ellenborough's predecessor as President of the Board of Control, informing him that the proclamation about to be issued would require some further explanation which the pressure of work did not allow its author just then to give. Lord Canning wrote this under the belief that Mr. Vernon Smith was still at the head of the Board of Control. Mr. Vernon Smith did not tell Lord Ellenborough anything about this letter; and it was of course very strongly urged that, had Lord Ellenborough known of such a document being in existence, he would have held his hand and waited for the further explanation. Mr. Vernon Smith, it was explained, was in Ireland when the letter arrived, and did not get it in time to prevent the action of Lord Ellenborough; and Lord Granville stated that he had himself had a letter to a similar effect from Lord Canning of which he told Lord Ellenborough, but that that impetuous nobleman did not show the least interest in it, and did not even hear it out to the end. Still there was an obvious difference between a letter to a friend and what might be considered an official communication to Lord Ellenborough's predecessor in the very office on behalf of which he issued his censure; and at all events the unexpected revelation tended greatly to strengthen the position of the Government. The attack made by Mr. Cardwell broke down or crumbled away. Mr. Disraeli described the process of its disappearance in a speech which he delivered a few days after at Slough, and the description is one of his happiest pieces of audacious eloquence. "It was like a convulsion of nature rather than any ordinary transaction of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria or Peru. There was a rumbling murmur, a groan, a shriek, a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the House. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground, and then a village disappeared; then a tall tower toppled down; and the

whole of the opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy." Assuredly Mr. Disraeli was entitled to crow over his baffled antagonists. "Do you triumph, Roman, do you triumph?" It must have been a meeker Roman than Mr. Disraeli who would not have triumphed over so complete and unexpected a humiliation of his enemies. The debate in the House of Commons was memorable in other ways, as well as for its direct political consequences. It first gave occasion for Mr. Cairns, as he then was, to display the extraordinary capacity as a debater which he possessed, and which he afterwards made of such solid and brilliant service to his party. It was also the occasion of the Count de Montalembert's celebrated pamphlet "*Un débat sur l'Inde au Parlement Anglais*," for which, and its thrilling contrast between the political freedom of England and the imperial servitude of France, he had the honour of being prosecuted by the French Government, and defended by M. Berryer.

Lord Canning continued his policy, the policy which he had marked out for himself, with signal success. The actual proclamation had little or no effect, as punishment, on the landholders of Oudh. It was never intended by Lord Canning that it should have any such. In fact, within a few weeks after the capture of Lucknow, almost all the large landowners had tendered their allegiance. Lord Canning impressed upon his officers the duty of making their rule as considerate and conciliatory as possible. The new system established in Oudh was based upon the principle of recognising the Talookdars as responsible landholders, while so limiting their power by the authority of the Government as to get rid of old abuses, and protect the occupiers and cultivators of the soil. The rebellion had abundantly proved that the village communities were too feeble and broken to hold the position which had been given with success to similar communities in the Punjab. It should be remembered in considering Lord Canning's policy that a proprietary right, by whatever name it may be distinguished or disguised, has always been claimed by the Government of India. It is only parted

with under leases or settlements that are liable to be revised and altered. The settlements which Lord Canning effected in India easily survived the attacks made upon their author. They would have been short-lived, indeed, if they had not long survived himself as well. Canning, like Durham, only lived long enough to hear the general acknowledgment that he had done well for the country he was sent to govern, and for the country in whose name and with whose authority he went forth.

The rebellion pulled down with it a famous old institution, the government of the East India Company. Before the mutiny had been entirely crushed, the rule of "John Company" came to an end. The administration of India had, indeed, long ceased to be under the control of the Company as it was in the days of Warren Hastings. A Board of Directors, nominated partly by the Crown and partly by the Company, sat in Leadenhall Street, and gave general directions for the government of India. But the parliamentary department, called the Board of Control, had the right of reviewing and revising the decisions of the Company. The Crown had the power of nominating the Governor-General, and the Company had only the power of recalling him. This odd and perhaps unparalleled system of double government had not much to defend it on strictly logical grounds; and the moment a great crisis came it was natural that all the blame of difficulty and disaster should be laid upon its head. With the beginning of the mutiny the impression began to grow up in the public mind here that something of a sweeping nature must be done for the reorganisation of India; and before long this vague impression crystallised into a conviction that England must take Indian administration into her own hands, and that the time had come for the fiction of rule by a trading company to be absolutely given up. Indeed, Lord Ellenborough had recommended in his evidence before a Select Committee of the Commons on Indian affairs as far back as 1852, that the government of India should be transferred from the Company to the Crown. As we have already seen, the famous system of government which was established by Pitt was really the government of the

Crown; at least, Pitt made the administration of India completely subject to the English Government. The difference between Pitt's measure and that introduced by Fox was, that Pitt preserved the independence of the Company in matters of patronage and commerce, whereas Fox would have placed the whole commerce and commercial administration of the Company under the control of a body nominated by the Crown. By the Act of 1853 the patronage of the Civil Service was taken from the Company, and yet was not given to the Crown. It was in fact a competitive system. Scientific and civil appointments were made to depend on capacity and fitness alone. Macaulay spoke for the last time in the House of Commons in support of the principle of admission by competitive examination to the Civil Service of India. In the beginning of 1858 Lord Palmerston introduced a bill to transfer the authority of the Company formally and absolutely to the Crown. The plan of the scheme was that there were to be a president and a council of eight members, to be nominated by the Government. There was a large majority in the House of Commons in favour of the Bill; but the agitation caused by the attempt to assassinate the Emperor of the French, and Palmerston's ill-judged and ill-timed Conspiracy Bill, led to the sudden overthrow of his Government. When Lord Derby succeeded to power, he brought in a bill for the better government of India at once; but the measure was a failure. It was of preposterous construction. It bore upon its face curious evidence of the fantastic ingenuity of Lord Ellenborough. It created a Secretary of State for India, with a council of eighteen. Nine of these were to be nominees of the Crown; nine were to be concessions to the principle of popular election. Four of the elected must have served her Majesty in India for at least ten years, or have been engaged in trade in that country for fifteen years; and they were to be elected by the votes of any one in this country who had served the Queen or the Government of India for ten years; or any proprietor of capital stock in Indian railways or other public works in India to the amount of two thousand pounds; or any proprietor of India stock to the amount of

one thousand pounds. The other five members of the council must as their qualifications have been engaged in commerce in India, or in the exportation of manufactured goods to that country, for five years, or must have resided there for ten years. These five were to be elected by the parliamentary constituencies of London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast. This clause was Lord Ellenborough's device. Anything more absurdly out of tune with the whole principle of popular election than this latter part of the scheme it would be difficult to imagine. The theory of popular election is simply that every man knows best what manner of representative is best qualified to look after his interests in the Legislative Assembly. But by no distortion of that principle can it be made to assert the doctrine that the parliamentary electors of London and Liverpool are properly qualified to decide as to the class of representatives who could best take care of the interests of Bengal, Bombay, and the Punjaub. Again, as if it was not absurd enough to put elections to the governing body of India into the hands of such constituencies, the field of choice was so limited for them as to render it almost impossible that they could elect really suitable men. It was well pointed out at the time that by the ingenious device of the Government a constituency might send to the Indian Council any man who had exported beer in a small way to India for five years, but could not send Mr. John Stuart Mill there. The measure fell dead. It had absolutely no support in the House or in the country. It had only to be described in order to insure its condemnation. It was withdrawn before it had gone to a second reading. Then Lord John Russell came to the help of the puzzled Government, who evidently thought they had been making a generous concession to the principle of popular election and were amazed to find their advances so coldly and contemptuously received. Lord John Russell proposed that the House should proceed by way of resolutions—that is that the lines of a measure should be laid down by a series of resolutions in committee of the whole House; and that upon those lines the Government should construct a measure. The

suggestion was eagerly welcomed, and after many nights of discussion a basis of legislation was at last agreed upon. This bill passed into law in the autumn of 1858; and for the remainder of Lord Derby's tenure of power, his son, Lord Stanley, was Secretary of State for India. The bill, which was called "An Act for the better Government of India," provided that all the territories previously under the government of the East India Company were to be vested in her Majesty, and all the Company's powers to be exercised in her name. One of her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State was to have all the power previously exercised by the Company, or by the Board of Control. The Secretary was to be assisted by a Council of India, to consist of fifteen members, of whom seven were to be elected by the Court of Directors from their own body, and eight nominated by the Crown. The vacancies among the nominated were to be filled up by the Crown; those among the elected by the remaining members of the Council for a certain time, but afterwards by the Secretary of State for India. The competitive principle for the Civil Service was extended in its application and made thoroughly practical. The military and naval forces of the Company were to be deemed the forces of her Majesty. A clause was introduced declaring that, except for the purpose of preventing or repelling actual invasion of India, the Indian revenues should not, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, be applicable to defray the expenses of any military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of her Majesty's Indian possessions. Another clause enacted that whenever an order was sent to India directing the commencement of hostilities by her Majesty's forces there the fact should be communicated to Parliament within three months, if Parliament were then sitting, or if not, within one month after its next meeting. These clauses were heard of more than once in later days. The Viceroy and Governor-General was to be supreme in India, but was to be assisted by a Council. India now has nine provinces, each under its own civil government, and independent of the others, but all subordinate to the authority of the Viceroy. In accordance with this Act the govern-



ment of the Company, the famed "John Company," formally ceased on September 1, 1858; and the Queen was proclaimed throughout India in the following November, with Lord Canning for her first Viceroy. It was but fitting that the man who had borne the strain of that terrible crisis, who had brought our Indian Empire safely through it all, and who had had to endure so much obloquy and to live down so much calumny, should have his name consigned to history as that of the first of the line of British Viceroys in India.

It seems almost superfluous to say that so great a measure as the extinction of the East India Company did not pass without some protest and some opposition. The authorship of some of the protests makes them too remarkable to be passed over without a word. Among the ablest civil servants the East India Company ever had were James Mill and his son John Stuart Mill. Both had risen in succession to the same high post in the Company's service. The younger Mill was still an official of the Company when, as he has put it in his own words, "it pleased Parliament, in other words, Lord Palmerston, to put an end to the East India Company, as a branch of the Government of India under the Crown, and convert the administration of that country into a thing to be scrambled for by the second and third class of English parliamentary politicians." "I," says Mr. Mill, "was the chief manager of the resistance which the Company made to their own political extinction, and to the letters and petitions I wrote for them, and the concluding chapter of my treatise on representative government, I must refer for my opinions on the folly and mischief of this ill-considered change." One of the remonstrances drawn up by Mr. Mill, and presented to Parliament on behalf of the East India Company, is as able a state paper probably as any in the archives of modern England. This is not the place, however, in which to enter on the argument it so powerfully sustained. "It has been the destiny of the government of the East India Company," says Mr. Mill, in the closing passage of his essay on "Representative Government," "to suggest the true theory of the government of a semi-

barbarous dependency by a civilised country, and after having done this, to perish. It would be a singular fortune if, at the end of two or three more generations, this speculative result should be the only remaining fruit of our ascendancy in India ; if posterity should say of us, that having stumbled accidentally upon better arrangements than our wisdom would ever have devised, the first use we made of our awakened reason was to destroy them, and allow the good which had been in course of being realised to fall through and be lost, from ignorance of the principles on which it depended." "*Di meliora*," Mr. Mill adds ; and we are glad to think that after the lapse of more than twenty years, there is as yet no sign of the realisation of the fears which he expressed with so much eloquence and earnestness. Mr. Mill was naturally swayed by the force of association with, and confidence in, the great organisation with which he and his father had been connected so long ; and, moreover, no one can deny that he has, in his protests, fairly presented some of the dangers that may now and then arise out of a system which throws the responsibility for the good government of India wholly on a body so likely to be alien, apathetic, unsympathetic, as the English Parliament. But the whole question was one of comparative danger and convenience ; the balance of advantage certainly seemed, even as a matter of speculation, to be with the system of more direct government. It is a mistake, too, to suppose that it was the will, or the caprice, of Lord Palmerston that made the change. Rightly or wrongly, it is certain that almost the whole voice of English public opinion cried out for the abolition of the East India Company. It was the one thing which everybody could suggest to be done, at a time of excitement when everybody thought he was bound to suggest something. It would have required a minister less fond of popularity than Lord Palmerston to resist such an outcry, or pretend that he did not hear it. In this, as in so many other cases, Lord Palmerston only seemed to lead public opinion, while he was really following it. One other remark it is also fair to make. We have had no indications, as yet, of any likelihood that the administra-

tion of India is to become a thing to be scrambled for by second and third class parliamentary politicians. The administration of India means, of course, the viceroyalty. Now there have been, since Lord Canning, five viceroys, and of these, three at least were not parliamentary politicians at all. Sir John Lawrence never was in Parliament until he was raised to the peerage, after his return home from India. Lord Elgin may be fairly described as never having been in Parliament, unless in the technical sense which makes every man on whom a peer's title is conferred a parliamentary personage; and the same holds true of Lord Lytton, who had no more to do with Parliament than was involved in the fact of his having succeeded to his father's title. Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, to whom perhaps an invidious critic might apply the term second or third class parliamentary politicians, on the ground that neither had obtained very high parliamentary distinction, proved nevertheless very capable, and indeed excellent administrators of Indian affairs, and fully justified the choice of the ministers who appointed them. Indeed, the truth is that the change made in the mode of governing India by the Act which we have just been describing was more of name than of reality. India was ruled by a Governor-General and a board before; it has been ruled by a Governor-General, called a Viceroy, and a board since. The idea which Mr. Mill had evidently formed in his mind, of a restless and fussy Parliament for ever interfering in the affairs of India, proved to have been a false impression altogether. Parliament soon ceased to take the slightest interest, collectively, in the affairs of India. Once more it came to be observed that an Indian budget, or other question connected with the government of our great empire in the East, could thin the House as in the days before the Mutiny. Again, as before, some few men profoundly in earnest took care and thought of the subject of India, and were condemned to pour out the results of their study and experience to a listening Under Secretary and a chill array of green leather benches. At intervals, when some piquant question arose, of little importance save to the Court official or the partisan, like

the project for conferring an imperial crown, brand new and showy as a stage diadem, on the wearer of the great historic emblem of English monarchy, then, indeed, public opinion condescended to think about India, and there were keen parliamentary debates and much excitement in fashionable circles. Sometimes, when there was talk of Russian ambition seeking, somehow, a pathway into India, a sort of public spirit was aroused, not, perhaps, wholly unlike the manly emotion of Squire Sullen, in the "Beaux Stratagem," when he discovers that a foreigner is paying court to the woman he has so long neglected. But as a rule the English Parliament has wholly falsified Mr. Mill's prediction, and has not intruded itself in any way upon the political administration of India.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE ORSINI BOMBS EXPLODE IN PARIS AND LONDON

THE last chapter has told us that Lord Palmerston introduced a measure to transfer to the Crown the government of India, but that unexpected events in the meanwhile compelled him to resign office, and called Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli to power. These events had nothing to do directly with the general policy of Lord Palmerston or Lord Derby. At midday of January 14, 1858, no one could have had the slightest foreboding of anything about to happen which could affect the place of Lord Palmerston in English politics. He seemed to be as popular and as strong as a minister well could be. There had been a winter session called together on December 3, to pass a bill of indemnity for the Government, who had suspended the Bank Charter Act during the terrible money-panic of the autumn, and the failures of banks and commercial firms. The Bank was authorised, by the suspension of the Charter Act, to extend its circulation two millions beyond the limit of that Act. The effect of this step in restoring confidence was so great that the Bank had only

to put in circulation some £900,000 beyond the limit of 1844, and even that sum was replaced, and a certain reserve established by the close of the year. Most people thought the Government had met the difficulty promptly, and well, and were ready to offer their congratulations. Parliament adjourned at Christmas, and was to meet early in February. The Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of the Queen, was to be married to the Prince Frederick William, eldest son of the then Prince of Prussia, now German Emperor, and it was to be Lord Palmerston's pleasant task, when Parliament resumed in February, to move a vote of congratulation to her Majesty on her child's marriage. Meantime, however, on the evening of January 14, Felice Orsini, an Italian exile, made his memorable attempt to assassinate the Emperor of the French. Orsini lost himself, and he drew the English Government down at the same time.

Felice Orsini was well known in England. After his romantic escape from a prison at Mantua, he came to this country and delivered lectures in several towns. He described the incidents of his escape and denounced Austrian rule in Italy, and was made a lion of in many places. He was a handsome soldierly-looking man, with intensely dark eyes and dark beard, in appearance almost the model Italian conspirator of romance. He was not an orator, but he was able to tell his story clearly and well. One great object which he had in view was to endeavour to rouse up the English people to some policy of intervention on behalf of Italy against Austria. It is almost impossible for a man like Orsini to take the proper measure of the enthusiasm with which he is likely to be received in England. He goes to several public meetings; he is welcomed by immense crowds; he is cheered to the echo; and he gets to be under the impression that the whole country is on his side and ready to do anything he asks for. He does not understand that the crowds go for the most part out of curiosity; that they represent no policy or action, whatever, and that they will have forgotten all about him by the day after tomorrow. Of those who went to hear Orsini, and who

applauded him so liberally, not one in ten probably had any distinct idea as to who he was or what cause he represented. He was an Italian exile who had escaped from tyranny of some sort somewhere, and he was a good-looking man; and that was enough for many or most of his audiences. But Orsini was thoroughly deceived. He convinced himself that he was forming public opinion in England; that he was inspiring the people, that the people would inspire the Government, and that the result would be an armed intervention on behalf of Lombardy and Venetia. At a meeting which he held in Liverpool a merchant of that town, who sympathised cordially with Orsini's cause, had the good sense to get up and tell Orsini that he was cruelly deceiving himself if he fancied that England either would or could take any step to intervene on behalf of the Italian provinces then held by Austria. Orsini at first thought little of this warning. After a while, however, he found out that the advice was sound and just. He saw that England would do nothing. He might have seen that even the English Liberals, with the exception of a very few enthusiasts, were entirely against his projects. They were in fact just as much opposed to the principle of intervention in the affairs of other States as the Conservatives. But Orsini set himself to devise explanations for what was simply the prudent and just determination of all the statesmen and leading politicians of the country. He found the explanation in the subtle influence of the Emperor of the French. It happened that during Orsini's residence in this country the Emperor and Empress of the French came on a visit to the Queen at Osborne; and Orsini saw in this a conclusive confirmation of his suspicions. Disappointed, despairing, and wild with anger against Louis Napoleon, he appears then to have allowed the idea to get possession of him that the removal of the Emperor of the French from the scene was an indispensable preliminary to any policy having for its object the emancipation of Italy from Austrian rule. He brooded on this idea until it became a project and a passion. It transformed a soldier and a patriot into an assassin.

On January 14, Orsini and his fellow-conspirators made their attempt in the Rue Lepelletier in Paris. As the Emperor and Empress of the French were driving up to the door of the Opera-house in that street, Orsini and his companions flung at and into the carriage three shells or bombs shaped like a pear, and filled with detonating powder. The shells exploded, and killed and wounded many persons. So minute were the fragments into which the bombs burst that 516 wounds, great and little, were inflicted by the explosion. This attempt at assassination was unfavourably distinguished from most other attempts by the fact that it took no account of the number of innocent lives which it imperilled. The murderers of William the Silent, of Henry IV., of Abraham Lincoln, could at least say that they only struck at the objects of their hate. In Orsini's case the Emperor's wife, the Emperor's attendants and servants, the harmless and unconcerned spectators in the crowd, who had no share in Austrian misgovernment, were all exposed to the danger of death or of horrible mutilation. Ten persons were killed ; 156 were wounded. For any purpose it aimed at the project was an utter failure. It only injured those who had nothing to do with Orsini's cause, or the condition of the Italian populations. We may as well dispose at once also of a theory which was for a time upheld by some who would not indeed justify or excuse Orsini's attempt, but who were inclined to believe that it was not made wholly in vain. Orsini failed, it was said ; but nevertheless the Emperor of the French did soon after take up the cause of Italy ; and he did so because he was afraid of the still living confederates of the Lombard Scaevola, and wished to purchase safety for himself by conciliating them. Even the Prince Consort wrote to a friend on April 11, 1858, about Louis Napoleon : " I fear he is at this moment meditating some Italian development, which is to serve as a lightning conductor, for ever since Orsini's letter he has been all for Italian independence." Historical revelations made at a later period show that this is altogether a mistake. We now know that at the time of the Congress of Paris Count Cavour had virtually arranged with the Emperor the plans of policy which were afterwards

carried out, and that even before that time Cavour was satisfied in his own mind as to the ultimate certainty of Louis Napoleon's co-operation. Those who are glad to see Italy a nation may be glad to know that Orsini's bombs had nothing to do with her success.

Orsini was arrested. Curiously enough his arrest was made more easy by the fact that he himself received a wound from one of the fragments of shell, and he was tracked by his own blood marks. Great as his crime was, he compelled a certain admiration from all men by the manner in which he bore his fate. He avowed his guilt, and made a strenuous effort to clear of all complicity in it a man who was accused of being one of the conspirators. He wrote from his prison to the Emperor, beseeching him to throw his influence into the national cause of Italy. He made no appeal on his own behalf. The Emperor, it is believed, was well inclined to spare his life; but the comprehensive heinousness of the crime which took in so many utterly blameless persons, rendered it almost impossible to allow the leading conspirator to escape. As it was, the French Government certainly showed no unreasonable severity. Four persons were put on trial as participators in the attempt, three of them having actually thrown the bombs. Only two were executed, Orsini and Pierri; the other two were sentenced to penal servitude for life. This, on the whole, was merciful dealing. Three Fenians, it must be remembered, were executed in Manchester for an attempt to rescue some prisoners, in which one police officer was killed by one shot. Orsini's project was a good deal more criminal, most sane persons will admit, than a mere attempt to rescue a prisoner; and it was the cause not of one but of many deaths. "Orsini died like a soldier, without bravado and without the slightest outward show of fear. As he and his companion Pierri were mounting the scaffold, he was heard to encourage the latter in a quiet tone. Pierri continued to show signs of agitation, and then Orsini was heard to say in a voice of gentle remonstrance, "Try to be calm, my friend; try to be calm."

France was not very calm under the circumstances. An outburst of anger followed the attempt in the Rue Lepel-



letier ; but the anger was not so much against Orsini as against England. One of the persons charged along with Orsini, although he was not tried in Paris, for he could not be found there, was a Frenchman, Simon Bernard, who had long been living in London. It was certain that many of the arrangements for the plot were made in London. The bombs were manufactured in Birmingham, and were ordered for Orsini by an Englishman. It was known that Orsini had many friends and admirers in this country. The Imperialists in France at once assumed that England was a country where assassination of foreign sovereigns was encouraged by the population, and not discouraged by the laws. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Walewski, wrote a despatch, in which he asked whether England considered that hospitality was due to assassins. "Ought English legislation," he asked, "to contribute to favour their designs and their attempts, and can it continue to shelter persons who by their flagrant acts put themselves outside the pale of common rights, and under the ban of humanity?" The Duc de Persigny, then Ambassador of France in England, made a very foolish and unfortunate reply to a deputation from the Corporation of London, in which he took on himself to point out that if the law of England was strong enough to put down conspiracies for assassination it ought to be put in motion, and if it were not, it ought to be made stronger. Persigny did not indeed put this forward as his own contribution of advice to England. He gave it as an expression of the public feeling of France, and as an explanation of the anger which was aflame in that country. "France," he said, "does not understand and cannot understand this state of things ; and in that lies the danger, for she may mistake the true sentiments of her ally and may cease to believe in England's sincerity." Talk of that kind would have been excusable and natural on the part of an Imperialist orator in the Corps Législatif in Paris ; but it was silly and impertinent when it came from a professional diplomatist. That flavour of the canteen and the barrack-room, which the Prince Consort detected and disliked in the Emperor's associates, was very perceptible in Persigny's harangue.

The barrack-room and the canteen, however, had much more to say in the matter. Addresses of congratulation were poured in upon the Emperor from the French army, and many of them were full of insulting allusions to England as the sheltering-ground of assassination. One regiment declared that it longed to demand an account from "the land of impurity which contains the haunts of the monsters who are sheltered by its laws." This regiment begged of the Emperor to give them the order, "and we will pursue them even to their stronghold." In another address, it was urged that "the infamous haunt (*repaire infâme*) in which machinations so infernal are planned"—London, that is—"should be destroyed for ever." Some of these addresses were inserted in the *Moniteur*, then the official organ of the French Government. It was afterwards explained that the official sanction thus apparently given to the rhodomontades of the French colonels was a mere piece of inadvertence. There were so many addresses sent in, it was said, that some of them escaped examination. Count Walewski expressed the regret of the Emperor that language and sentiments so utterly unlike his own should have found their way into publicity. It is certain that Louis Napoleon would never have deliberately sanctioned the obstreperous buffoonery of such sentences as we have referred to; but anyhow the addresses were published, were read in England, and aroused in this country an amount of popular resentment not unlikely to explode in utterances as vehement and thoughtless as those of the angry French colonels themselves.

Let us do justice to the French colonels. Their language was ludicrous; nothing but the grossness of its absurdity saved it from being intolerably offensive. But the feeling which dictated it was not unnatural. Foreign countries always find it hard to understand the principles of liberty which are established in England. They assume that if a State allows certain things to be done it must be because the State wishes to see them done. If men are allowed to plot against foreign sovereigns in England it can only be, they argue, because the English Government likes to have plots carried on against foreign sovereigns. It would be

impossible to deny that people in this country are singularly thoughtless in their encouragement of any manner of foreign revolution. Even where there are restrictive laws public opinion will hardly sanction their being carried out. London is and long has been the head-quarters of revolutionary plot. No one knew that better than Louis Napoleon himself. No one had made more unscrupulous use of a domicile in London to carry out political and revolutionary projects. Associations have been formed in London to supply men and money to Don Carlos, to Queen Isabella, to the Polish Revolutionists, to Hungary, to Garibaldi, to the Southern Confederation, to the Circassians, to anybody and everybody who could say that he represented a defeat, or a victory, or a national cause, or anything. In 1860 Lord John Russell admitted in the House of Commons that it would be impossible to put into execution our laws against foreign enlistment, because every political party and almost every man was concerned in breaking them at one time or another. He referred to the fact that, some forty years before, the cause of Greece against Turkey had been taken up openly in London by public men of the highest mark, and that money, arms, and men were got together for Greece without the slightest pretence at concealment. While he was speaking a legion was being formed in one place to fight for Victor Emmanuel against the Pope ; in another place to fight for the Pope against Victor Emmanuel. Every refugee was virtually free to make London a basis of operations against the Government which had caused his exile. There were, it is right to say, men who construed the conditions upon which they were sheltered in England with a conscientious severity. They held that they were protected by this country on the implied understanding that they took no part in any proceedings that might tend to embarrass her in her dealings with foreign States. They argued that the obligation on them, whether declared or not, was exactly the same as that which rests on one who asks and obtains the hospitality and shelter of a private house : the obligation not to involve his host in quarrels with his neighbours. M. Louis Blanc, for example, who lived some twenty years in England,

declined on principle to take part in secret political movements of any kind during all the time. But the great majority of the exiles of all countries were incessantly engaged in political plots and conspiracies; and undoubtedly some of these were nothing more or less than conspiracies to assassinate. Many of the leading exiles were intimately associated with prominent and distinguished Englishmen; and these same exiles were naturally associated to some extent with many of their own countrymen of a lower and less scrupulous class. It had therefore happened more than once before this time, and it happened more than once afterwards, that when a plot at assassination was discovered the plotters were found to have been on more or less intimate terms with some leading exiles in London, who themselves were well acquainted with eminent Englishmen. Men with a taste for assassination are to be found among the camp-followers of every political army. To assume that because the leaders of the party may have been now and then associated with them, they must therefore be acquainted with and ought to be held responsible for all their plots, is not less absurd than it would be to assume that an officer in a campaign must have been in the secret when some reprobate of his regiment was about to plunder a house. But the French colonels saw that the assassin this time was not a nameless scoundrel, but a man of birth and distinction like Felice Orsini, who had been received and welcomed everywhere in England. It is not very surprising if they assumed that his projects had the approval and favour of English public opinion. The French Government indeed ought to have known better. But the French Government lost for the moment its sense and self-control. A semi-official pamphlet, published in Paris, and entitled "The Emperor Napoleon the Third and England," actually went the ridiculous length of describing an obscure debating club in a Fleet Street public-house, where a few dozen honest fellows smoked their pipes of a night and talked hazy politics, as a formidable political institution where regicide was nightly preached to fanatical desperadoes.

Thus we had the public excited on both sides. The feeling of anger on this side was intensified by the con-

viction that France was insulting us because she thought England was crippled by her troubles in India, and had no power to resent an insult. It was while men here were smarting under this sense of wrong that Lord Palmerston introduced his famous measure for the suppression and punishment of conspiracies to murder. The bill was introduced in consequence of the despatch of Count Walewski. In that despatch it was suggested to the English Government that they ought to do something to strengthen their law. "Full of confidence," Count Walewski said, "in the exalted reason of the English Cabinet, we abstain from all indication as regards the measures which it may be suitable to take. We rely on them for a careful appreciation of the decision which they shall judge most proper, and we congratulate ourselves in the firm persuasion that we shall not have appealed in vain to their conscience and their loyalty." The words were very civil. They were words as sweet as those of which Cassius says, that "they rob the Hybla bees and leave them honeyless." Nor was the request they contained in itself unreasonable. Long afterwards this country had to acknowledge, in reply to the demands of the United States, that a nation cannot get rid of her responsibility to a foreign people by pleading that her municipal legislation does not provide for this or that emergency. If somebody domiciled among us shoots his arrow over the house and hurts our foreign brother, it is not enough for us to say, when complaint is made, that we have no law to prevent people from shooting arrows out of our premises. The natural rejoinder is, "Then you had better make such a law; you are not to injure us and get off by saying your laws allow us to be injured." But the conditions under which the request was made by France had put England in the worst possible mood for acceding to it. We have all heard of the story of General Jackson, who was on one occasion very near refusing in wrath a reasonable and courteous request of the French Government, because his secretary, in translating the letter for Jackson, who did not know French, began with the words "the French Government demands." Jackson vehemently declared that if the French Government dared to demand

anything of the United States they should not have it. It was only when it had been made quite clear to him that the French word *demande* did not by any means correspond with the English word "demand," that the angry soldier consented even to listen to the representation of France. The English public mind was now somewhat in Jackson's mood. It was under the impression that France was making a demand, and was not in a temper to grant it. Ominous questions were put to the Government in both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Commons Mr. Roebuck asked whether any communications had passed between the Governments of England and France with respect to the Alien Act or any portion of our criminal code. Lord Palmerston answered by mentioning Count Walewski's despatch, which he said should be laid before the House. He added a few words about the addresses of the French regiments, and pleaded that allowance should be made for the irritation caused by the attempt on the life of the Emperor. He was asked a significant question—had the Government sent any answer to Count Walewski's despatch? No, was the reply; her Majesty's Government had not answered it; not yet.

Two or three days after Lord Palmerston moved for leave to bring in the Conspiracy to Murder Bill. The chief object of the measure was to make conspiracy to murder a felony instead of a mere misdemeanour, as it had been in England, and to render it liable to penal servitude for any period varying from five years to a whole life. Lord Palmerston made a feeble and formal attempt to prove that his bill was introduced simply as a measure of needed reform in our criminal legislation, and without special reference to anything that had happened in France. The law against conspiracy to murder was very light in England, he showed, and was very severe in Ireland. It was now proposed to make the law the same in both countries—that was all. Of course no one was deceived by this explanation. The Bill itself was as much of a sham as the explanation. Such a measure would not have been of any account whatever as regarded the offences against which it was particularly directed. As Lord John Russell said, in the

debate, it would argue great ignorance of human nature to imagine that a fanatic of the Orsini class, or any of those whom such a man could fascinate by his influence, would be deterred by the mere possibility of a sentence of penal servitude. Lord Palmerston, we may be sure, did not put the slightest faith in the efficacy of the piece of legislation he had undertaken to recommend to Parliament. It was just as in the case of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. He was compelled to believe that the Government would have to do something; and he came, after a while, to the conclusion that the most harmless measure would be the best. He had had an idea of asking Parliament to empower the Secretary of State to send out of the country foreigners whom the Government believed to be engaged in plotting against the life of a foreign sovereign; the Government being under obligation to explain the grounds for their belief and their action to a secret committee of Parliament, or to a committee composed of the three chiefs of the law courts. Such a measure as this would probably have proved effective; but it would have been impossible to induce the House of Commons to pass such a bill, or to entrust such power to any Government. Indeed, if it were not certain that Palmerston did entertain such a project, the language he used in his speech when introducing the Conspiracy Bill might lead one to believe that nothing could have been further from his thoughts. He disclaimed any intention to propose a measure which should give power to a Government to remove aliens on mere suspicion. He "was sure it was needless for him to say he had no such intention." He had, however, such an intention at one time. His biographer, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, is clear on that point, and there cannot be better authority. It must have been only for a moment that Palmerston even thought of making a proposal of the kind to an English Parliament. He had not been long enough in the Home Office, it would seem, to understand thoroughly the temper of his countrymen. Indeed, in this instance he made a mistake every way. When he assented to the introduction of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill he was right in thinking that English public opinion wished to have something

done; but in this case the inclination of public opinion was the other way; it wished to have nothing done; at least, at that moment. Mr. Kinglake moved an amendment, formally expressing the sympathy of the House with the French people, on account of the attempt made against the Emperor, but declaring it inexpedient to legislate, in compliance with the demand made in Count Walewski's despatch of January 20, "until further information is before it of the communications of the two Governments subsequent to the date of that despatch." A discussion took place, in which Mr. Roebuck pointed out, very properly, that in any new measure of legislation it was not punishment of crime accomplished that was required, but discovery of crime meditated; and he also showed, with much effect, that in some cases, when the English Government had actually warned the Government of France that some plot was afoot, and that the plotters had left for Paris, the Paris police were unable to find them out, or to benefit in any way by the action of the English authorities. Mr. Disraeli voted for the bringing in of the bill, and made a cautious speech, in which he showed himself in favour of some sort of legislation, but did not commit himself to approval of that particular measure. This prudence proved convenient afterwards, when the crisis of the debate showed that it would be well for him to throw himself into the ranks of the opponents of the measure. The bill was read a first time. Two hundred and ninety-nine votes were for it; only ninety-nine against. But before it came on for a second reading public opinion was beginning to declare ominously against it. The fact that the Government had not answered the despatch of Count Walewski told heavily against them. It was afterwards explained that Lord Cowley had been instructed to answer it verbally, and that Lord Palmerston thought this course the more prudent, and the more likely to avoid an increase of irritation between the two countries. But public opinion in England was not now to be propitiated by counsels of moderation. The idea had gone abroad that Lord Palmerston was truckling to the Emperor of the French, and that the very right of asylum which England had so long afforded to the exiles



of all nations, was to be sacrificed at the bidding of one who had been glad to avail himself of it in his hour of need.

This idea received support from the arrest of Dr. Simon Bernard, a French refugee, who was immediately put on trial as an accomplice in Orsini's plot. Bernard was a native of the South of France, a surgeon by profession, and had lived a long time in England. He must have been, in outward aspect at least, the very type of a French Red Republican conspirator, to judge by the description given of him in the papers of the day. He is described as thin and worn, "with dark restless eyes, sallow complexion, a thick moustache, and a profusion of long black hair combed backwards, and reaching nearly to his shoulders, and exposing a broad but low and receding forehead." The arrest of Bernard may have been a very proper thing, but it came in with most untimely effect upon the Government. It was understood to have been made by virtue of information sent over from Paris, and no one could have failed to observe that the loosest accusations of that kind were always coming from the French capital. Many persons were influenced in their belief of Bernard's innocence by the fact, which does assuredly count for something, that Orsini himself had almost with his dying breath declared that Bernard knew nothing of the intended assassination. Not a few made up their minds that he was innocent because the French Government accused him of guilt; and still more declared that innocent or guilty he ought not to be arrested by English authorities at the bidding of a French Emperor. At the same time the Cantillon story was revived; the story of the legacy left by the First Napoleon to the man who attempted to assassinate the Duke of Wellington, and it was insisted that the legacy had been paid to Cantillon by the authority of Napoleon III.

The debate was over and the Conspiracy Bill disposed of before the Bernard trial came to an end; but we may anticipate by a few days, and finish the Bernard story. Bernard was tried at the Central Criminal Court under existing law; he was defended by Mr. Edwin James, a

well-known criminal lawyer, and he was acquitted. The trial was a practical evidence of the inutility of such special legislation as that which Lord Palmerston attempted to introduce. A new law of conspiracy could not have furnished any new evidence against Bernard or persuaded a jury to convict him on such evidence as there was. In the prevailing temper of the public the evidence should have been very clear indeed to induce an ordinary English jury to convict a man like Bernard, and the evidence of his knowledge of an intended assassination was anything but clear. Mr. Edwin James improved the hour. He made the trial an occasion for a speech denunciatory of tyrants generally, and he appealed in impassioned language to the British jury to answer the French tyrant by their verdict; which they did accordingly. Mr. James became a sort of popular hero for the time in consequence of his oration. He had rhetorical talent enough to make him a sort of Old Bailey Erskine, a Buzfuz Berryer. He set up for a liberal politician and tribune of the people, and was enabled after a while to transfer his eloquence to the House of Commons. He vapoured about as a friend of Italy and Garibaldi and oppressed nationalities generally for a year or two after; got into money and other difficulties, and had to extinguish his political career suddenly and ignominiously. He was indeed heard of after. He went to America, and he came back again. But we need not speak of him any more.

In the midst of the commotion caused by Bernard's arrest, and by the offer of £200 reward for the detection of an Englishman named Alsopp, also charged with complicity in the plot, Mr. Milner Gibson quietly gave notice of an amendment to the second reading of the Conspiracy Bill. The amendment proposed to declare that while the House heard with regret the allegation that the recent crime had been devised in England, and was always ready to assist in remedying any proved defects in the criminal law, "yet it cannot but regret that her Majesty's Government, previously to inviting the House to amend the law of conspiracy by the second reading of this bill at the present time, have not felt it to be their

duty to make some reply to the important despatch received from the French Government, dated Paris, January 20, 1858, and which has been laid before Parliament." It might have been seen at once that this was a more serious business for the Government than Mr. Kinglake's amendment. In forecasting the result of a motion in the House of Commons much depends on the person who brings it forward. Has he a party behind him? If so, then the thing is important. If not, let his ability be what it will, his motion is looked on as a mere expression of personal opinion, interesting perhaps but without political consequence. Mr. Kinglake was emphatically a man without a party behind him; Mr. Gibson was emphatically a man of party and of practical politics. Mr. Kinglake was a brilliant literary man who had proved little better than a failure in the House; Mr. Gibson was a successful member of Parliament and nothing else. No one could have supposed that Mr. Gibson was likely to get up a discussion for the mere sake of expressing his own opinion or making a display. He was one of those who had been turned out of Parliament when Palmerston made his triumphant appeal to the country on the China question. He was one of those whom *Punch* made fun of by a new adaptation of the old "*il n'y a pas de quoi*" story; one of those who could not sit because they had no seats. Now he had just been returned to Parliament by another constituency; and he was not likely to be the mouthpiece of a merely formal challenge to the policy of the Government. When the debate on the second reading came on it began soon to be seen that the condition of things was grave for Lord Palmerston. Every hour and every speech made it more ominous. Mr. Gladstone spoke eloquently against the Government. Mr. Disraeli suddenly discovered that he was bound to vote against the second reading, although he had voted for the first. The Government, he argued, had not yet answered the despatch as they might have done in the interval, and as they had not vindicated the honour of England, the House of Commons could not entrust them with the measure they demanded. Lord Palmerston saw that, in homely phrase,

the game was up. He was greatly annoyed ; he lost his temper, and did not even try to conceal the fact that he had lost it. He attacked Mr. Milner Gibson fiercely ; declared that "he appears for the first time in my memory as the champion of the dignity and honour of the country." He wandered off into an attack on the whole Peace party, or Manchester School, and told some story about one of their newspapers which laid it down as a doctrine, that it would not matter if a foreign enemy conquered and occupied England so long as they were allowed to work their mills. All this was in curiously bad taste. For a genial and kindly as well as a graceful man, it was singular how completely Lord Palmerston always lost his good manners when he lost his temper. Under the influence of sudden anger, luckily a rare influence with him, he could be actually vulgar. He was merely vulgar, for example, when on one occasion, wishing to throw ridicule on the pacific principles of Mr. Bright, he alluded to him in the House of Commons as "the honourable and reverend gentleman." Lord Palmerston, in his reply to Mr. Milner Gibson, showed a positive spitefulness of tone and temper very unusual in him, and especially unbecoming in a losing man. A statesman may rise as he will, but he should fall with dignity. When the division was taken it appeared that there were 215 votes for the second reading and 234 against it. The Government, therefore, were left in a minority of 19 ; 146 Conservatives were in the majority and 84 Liberals. Besides these there were such of the Peelite party as Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cardwell, and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Lord Palmerston at once made up his mind to resign. His resignation was accepted. Not quite a year had passed since the general elections sent Lord Palmerston into power triumphant over the routed Liberals and the prostrate Manchester School. The leaders of the Manchester party were actually driven from their seats. There was not a Cobden or a Bright to face the conqueror in Parliament. Not quite a year, and now, on the motion of one of the lieutenants of that same party returned to their position again, Lord Palmerston is ejected from office.

Palmerston once talked of having his "tit-for-tat with John Russell." The Peace party now had their tit-for-tat with him. "Cassio hath beaten thee, and thou by that small hurt hast cashiered Cassio."

Lord Palmerston had the satisfaction before he left office of being able to announce the capture of Canton. The operations against China had been virtually suspended, it will be remembered, when the Indian Mutiny broke out. To adopt the happy illustration of a clever writer, England had dealt with China for the time as a backwoodsman sometimes does with a tree in the American forests—"girdled" it with the axe, so as to mark it for felling at a more convenient opportunity. She had now got the co-operation of France. France had a complaint of long standing against China on account of the murder of some missionaries, for which redress had been asked in vain. The Emperor of the French was very glad to have an opportunity of joining his arms with those of England in any foreign enterprise. It advertised the Empire cheaply; it showed to Frenchmen how active the Emperor was, and how closely he had at heart the honour and the interests of France. An expedition to China in association with England could not be much of a risk, and would look well in the newspapers; whereas if England were to be allowed to go alone she would seem to be making too much of a position for herself in the East. There was, therefore, an allied attack made upon Canton, and of course the city was easily captured. Commissioner Yeh himself was taken prisoner, not until he had been sought for and hunted out in most ignominious fashion. He was found at last hidden away in some obscure part of a house. He was known by his enormous fatness. One of our officers caught hold of him; Yeh tried still to get away. A British seaman seized Yeh by his pigtail, twisted the tail several times round his hand, and the unfortunate Chinese dignitary was thus a helpless and ludicrous prisoner. He was not hurt in any serious way, but otherwise he was treated with about as much consideration as school-boys show towards a captured cat. The whole story of his capture may be read in the journals of the day, in some of

which it is treated as though it were an exploit worthy of heroes, and as if a Chinese with a pigtail were obviously a person on whom any of the courtesies of war would be thrown away. When it was convenient to let loose Yeh's pigtail, he was put on board an English man-of-war, and afterwards sent to Calcutta, where he died early in the following year. Unless report greatly belied him he had been exceptionally cruel, even for a Chinese official. It was said that he had ordered the beheading of about one hundred thousand rebels. There may be exaggeration in this number, but, as Voltaire says in another case, even if we reduce the total to half, "*cela serait encore admirable.*"

The English and French Envoys, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, succeeded in making a treaty with China. By the conditions of the treaty, England and France were to have ministers at the Chinese Court, on certain special occasions at least, and China was to be represented in London and Paris ; there was to be toleration of Christianity in China, and a certain freedom of access to Chinese rivers for English and French mercantile vessels, and to the interior of China for English and French subjects. China was to pay the expenses of the war. It was further agreed that the term "barbarian" was no longer to be applied to Europeans in China. There was great congratulation in England over this treaty, and the prospect it afforded of a lasting peace with China. The peace thus procured lasted in fact exactly a year.

Lord Palmerston then was out of office. Having nothing in particular to do, he presently went over to Compiègne on a visit to the Emperor of the French. For the second time his friendship for Louis Napoleon had cost him his place.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

## "ON THE TRUE FAITH OF A CHRISTIAN"

WHEN Mr. Disraeli became once more leader of the House of Commons, he must have felt that he had almost as difficult a path to tread as that of him described in "Henry the Fourth," who has to "o'erwalk a current roaring loud on the unsteadfast footing of a spear." The ministry of Lord Derby, whereof Mr. Disraeli was undoubtedly the sense-carrier, was not supported by a parliamentary majority, nor could it pretend to great intellectual and administrative ability. It had in its ranks two or three men of something like statesman capacity, and a number of respectable persons possessing abilities about equal to those of any intelligent business man or county magistrate. Mr. Disraeli of course became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Stanley undertook the Colonies; Mr. Walpole made a painstaking and conscientious Home Secretary, as long as he continued to hold the office. Lord Malmesbury muddled on with Foreign Affairs somehow; Lord Ellenborough's brilliant eccentric light perplexed for a brief space the Indian Department. General Peel was Secretary for War, and Mr. Henley President of the Board of Trade. Lord Naas, afterwards Lord Mayo, became Chief Secretary for Ireland, and was then supposed to be nothing more than a kindly, sweet-tempered man, of whom his most admiring friends would never have ventured to foreshadow such a destiny as that he should succeed to the place of a Canning and an Elgin, and govern the new India to which so many anxious eyes were turned. Sir John Pakington was made First Lord of the Admiralty, because a place of some kind had to be found for him, and he was as likely to do well at the head of the navy as anywhere else. A ridiculous story, probably altogether untrue, used to be told of President Lincoln in some of the difficult days of the American Civil War. He wanted a commander-in-chief, and he happened to be in conversation with a friend

on the subject of the war. Suddenly addressing the friend, he asked him if he had ever commanded an army. "No, Mr. President," was the reply. "Do you think you could command an army?" "I presume so, Mr. President; I know nothing to the contrary." He was appointed Commander-in-Chief at once. One might without great stretch of imagination conceive of a conversation of the same kind taking place between Sir John Pakington and Lord Derby. Sir John Pakington had no reason to know that he might not prove equal to the administration of the navy, and he became First Lord of the Admiralty accordingly. No Conservative Government could be supposed to get on without Lord John Manners, and luckily there was the Department of Public Works for him.

Lord Stanley was regarded as a statesman of great and peculiar promise. The party to which he belonged were inclined to make him an object of especial pride because he seemed to have in a very remarkable degree the very qualities which most of their leading members were generally accused of wanting. The epithet which Mr. Mill at a later period applied to the Tories, that of the stupid party, was the expression of a feeling very common in the political world, and under which many of the Conservatives themselves winced. The more intelligent a Conservative was the more was he inclined to chafe at the ignorance and dulness of many of the party. It was therefore with particular satisfaction that intelligent Tories saw among themselves a young statesman who appeared to have all those qualities of intellect and those educational endowments which the bulk of the party did not possess, and what was worse did not even miss. Lord Stanley had a calm meditative intellect. He studied politics as one may study a science. He understood political economy, that new-fangled science which had so bewildered his party, and of which the Peelites and the Manchester men made so much account. He had travelled much; not merely making the old-fashioned grand tour, which most of the Tory country gentlemen had themselves made, but visiting the United States and Canada and the Indies, East and West. He was understood to know all about geography and cotton



and sugar; and he had come up into politics in a happy age when the question of Free Trade was understood to be settled. The Tories were proud of him, as a democratic mob is proud of an aristocratic leader, or as a working men's convention is proud of the co-operation of some distinguished scholar. Lord Stanley was strangely unlike his father in intellect and temperament. The one man was indeed almost the very opposite of the other. Lord Derby was all instinct and passion; Lord Stanley was all method and calculation. Lord Derby amused himself in the intervals of political work by translating classic epics and odes; Lord Stanley beguiled an interval of leisure by the reading of Blue-books. Lord Derby's eloquence when at its worst became fiery nonsense; Lord Stanley's sank occasionally to be nothing better than platitude. The extreme of the one was rhapsody, and of the other commonplace. Lord Derby was too hot and impulsive to be always a sound statesman; Lord Stanley was too coldly methodical to be the statesman of a crisis. Both men were in a certain sense superficial and deceptive. Lord Derby's eloquence had no great depth in it; and Lord Stanley's wisdom often proved somewhat thin. The career of Lord Stanley did not afterwards bear out the expectations that were originally formed of him. He proved to be methodical, sensible, conscientious, slow. He belonged perhaps to that class of men about whom Goethe said, that if they could only once commit some extravagance we should have greater hopes of their future wisdom. He did not commit any extravagance; he remained careful, prudent, and slow. But at the time when he accepted the Indian Secretaryship it was still hoped that he would, to use a homely expression, warm to his work, and on both sides of the political contest people looked to him as a new and a great figure in Conservative politics. He was not an orator; he had nothing whatever of the orator in language or in temperament. His manner was ineffective; his delivery was decidedly bad. But his words carried weight with them, and even his commonplaces were received by some of his party as the utterances of an oracle. There were men among the Conservatives of the back benches who secretly hoped that in

this wise young man was the upcoming statesman who was to deliver the party from the thralldom of eccentric genius, and of an eloquence which, however brilliantly it fought their battles, seemed to them hardly a respectable sort of gift to be employed in the service of gentlemanlike Tory principles.

Lord Stanley had been in office before. During his father's first administration he had acted as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. On the death of Sir William Molesworth, Lord Palmerston had offered the Colonial Secretaryship to Lord Stanley; but Lord Stanley, although his Toryism was of the most moderate and liberal kind, did not see his way to take a seat in a Liberal administration. His appearance, therefore, as a Cabinet Minister in the Government formed by his father was an event looked to with great interest all over the country. The Liberals were not without a hope that he might some day find himself driven by his conscientiousness and his clear unprejudiced intelligence into the ranks of avowed Liberalism. It was confidently predicted of him in a Liberal review two or three years after this time that he would one day be found a prominent member of a Liberal Cabinet under the premiership of Mr. Gladstone. For the present, however, he is still the rising light—a somewhat cold and colourless light indeed—of Conservatism.

Arrayed against the Conservatives was a party disjoined indeed for the present, but capable at any moment, if they could only agree, of easily overturning the Government of Lord Derby. The superiority of the Opposition in debating power was simply overwhelming. In the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli was the only first-class debater, with the exception perhaps of the new Solicitor-General, Sir Hugh Cairns; and Sir Hugh Cairns, being new to office, was not expected as yet to carry very heavy metal in great debate. The best of their colleagues could only be called a respectable second class. Against them were Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Graham, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright, every one of whom was a first-class debater; some of them great parliamentary orators; some, too, with the influence that

comes from the fact of their having led ministries and conducted wars. In no political assembly in the world does experience of office and authority tell for more than in the House of Commons. To have held office confers a certain dignity even on mediocrity. The man who has held office, and who sits on the front bench opposite the ministry, has a sort of prescriptive right to be heard whenever he stands up to address the House, in preference to the most rising and brilliant talker who has never yet been a member of an administration. Mr. Disraeli had opposed to him not merely the eloquence of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, but the authority of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. It required much dexterity to make a decent show of carrying on a Government under such conditions. Mr. Disraeli well knew that his party held office only on sufferance from their opponents. If they attempted nothing, they were certain to be censured for inactivity; if they attempted anything, there was the chance of their exposing themselves to the combined attack of all the factions of the Liberal party. Luckily for them it was not easy to bring about such a combination just yet; but whenever it came, there was fore-shown the end of the ministry.

Lord Derby's Government quietly dropped the unlucky Conspiracy Bill. England and France were alike glad to be out of the difficulty. There was a short interchange of correspondence, in which the French Government explained that they really had meant nothing in particular, and it was then announced to both Houses of Parliament that the misunderstanding was at an end, and that friendship had set in again. We have seen already how the India Bill was carried. Lord Derby's tenure of office was made remarkable by the success of one measure which must have given much personal satisfaction to Mr. Disraeli. The son of a Jewish father, the descendant of an ancient Jewish race, himself received as a child into the Jewish community, Mr. Disraeli had since his earliest years of intelligence been a Christian. "I am, as I have ever been," he said himself when giving evidence once in a court of law, "a Christian." But he had never renounced his sympathies with the race to which he belonged, and the faith in which his fathers

worshipped. He had always stood up for the Jews. He had glorified the genius and the influence of the Jews in many pages of romantic, high-flown, and sometimes very turgid eloquence. He had in some of his novels seemingly set about to persuade his readers that all of good and great the modern world had seen was due to the unceasing intellectual activity of the Jew. He had vindicated with as sweeping a liberality the virtues of the Jewish race. In one really fine and striking sentence he declares that "a Jew is never seen upon the scaffold unless it be at an *auto-da-fé*." "Forty years ago," he says in his "Lord George Bentinck,"—"not a longer period than the children of Israel were wandering in the desert—the two most dishonoured races in Europe were the Attic and the Hebrew, and they were the two races that had done most for mankind."

Mr. Disraeli had the good fortune to see the civil emancipation of the Jews accomplished during the time of his leadership of the House of Commons. It was a coincidence merely. He had always assisted the movement towards that end; unlike some other men who carried on their faces the evidence of their Hebrew extraction, and who yet made themselves conspicuous for their opposition to it. But the success did not come from any inspiration of his; and most of his colleagues in power resisted it as long as they could. His former chief, Lord George Bentinck, it will be remembered, had resigned his leadership of the party in the House of Commons, because of the complaints made when he spoke and voted for the removal of Jewish disabilities. It was in July 1858 that the long political and sectarian struggle came to an end. Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, who has but lately died, was allowed to take his seat in the House of Commons on the 26th of that month, as one of the representatives of the City of London, and the controversy about Jewish disabilities was over at last. It is not uninteresting, before we trace the history of this struggle to its close, to observe how completely the conditions under which it was once carried on had changed in recent years. Of late the opposition to the claims of the Jews came almost exclusively from the Tories, and especially from the Tories in the House of

Lords, from the high churchmen and from the bishops. A century before that time the bishops were for the most part very willing that justice should be done to the Jews; and statesmen and professional politicians, looking at the question perhaps rather from the view of obvious necessity and expediency, were well-inclined to favour the claim made for rather than by their Jewish fellow-subjects. But at that time the popular voice cried out furiously against the Jews. The old traditions of calumny and hatred still had full influence, and the English people, as a whole, were determined that they would not admit the Jews to the rights of citizenship. They would borrow from them, buy from them, accept any manner of service from them, but they would not allow of their being represented in Parliament. As time went on all this feeling changed. The public in general became either absolutely indifferent to the question of Jewish citizenship or decidedly in favour of it. No statesman had the slightest excuse for professing to believe that an outcry would be raised by the people if he attempted to procure the representation of Jews by Jews in Parliament. We have seen how by steps the Jews made their way into municipal office and into the magistracy. At the same time persistent efforts were being made to obtain for them the right to be elected to the House of Commons. On April 5, 1830, Mr. Robert Grant, then a colleague of one of the Gurney family in the representation of Norwich, moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the civil disabilities affecting British-born subjects professing the Jewish religion. The claim which Mr. Grant made for the Jews was simply that they should be allowed to enjoy all those rights which we may call fundamental to the condition of the British subject, without having to profess the religion of the State. At that time the Jews were unable to take the oath of allegiance, passed in Elizabeth's reign, although it had nothing in its substance or language opposed to their claims, inasmuch as it was sworn on the Evangelists. Nor could they take the oath of abjuration, intended to guard against the return of the Stuarts, because that oath contained the words "on the true faith of a Christian." Before the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act in 1828, the

Sacrament had to be taken as a condition of holding any corporate office, and had to be taken before admission. In the case of offices held under the Crown it might be taken after admission. Jews, however, did obtain admission to corporate offices, not expressly as Jews, but as all Dissenters obtained it; that is to say by breaking the law, and having an annual indemnity bill passed to relieve them from the penal consequences. The repeal of the Test and Corporations Act put an end to this anomaly as regarded the Dissenters, but it unconsciously imposed a new disability on the Jew. The new declaration, substituted for the old oath, contained the words "on the true faith of a Christian." "The operation of the law was fatal," says Sir Erskine May, "to nearly all the rights of a citizen. A Jew could not hold any office, civil, military, or corporate. He could not follow the profession of the law as barrister or attorney, or attorney's clerk; he could not be a schoolmaster or an usher at a school. He could not sit as a member of either House of Parliament, nor even exercise the electoral franchise, if called upon to take the elector's oath." Thus, although no special Act was passed for the exclusion of the Jew from the rights of citizenship, he was effectually shut up in a sort of political and social Ghetto.

The debate on Mr. Grant's motion was made memorable by the fact that Macaulay delivered then his maiden speech. He rose at the same time with Sir James Mackintosh, and according to the graceful usage of the House of Commons, the new member was called on to speak. We need not go over the arguments used in the debate. Public opinion has settled the question so long and so completely that they have little interest for a time like ours. One curious argument is, however, worth a passing notice. One speaker, Sir John Wrottesley, declared that when it was notorious that seats were to be had in that House to any extent for money, he could not consent to allow any one to become a member who was not also a Christian. Bribery and corruption were so general and so bad that they could not with safety to the State be left to be the privilege of any but Christians. "If I be drunk," says Master Slender,

"I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God and not with drunken knaves." The proposal for the admission of Jews to Parliament was supported by Lord John Russell, O'Connell, Brougham and Mackintosh. Its first reading—for it was opposed even on the first reading—was carried by a majority of eighteen; but on the motion for the second reading the bill was thrown out by a majority of sixty-three, the votes for it being 165 and those against it 228. In 1833 Mr. Grant introduced his bill again, and this time was fortunate enough to pass it through the Commons. The Lords rejected it by a majority of fifty. The following year told a similar story. The Commons accepted; the Lords rejected. Meantime the Jews were being gradually relieved from other restrictions. A clause in Lord Denman's Act for amending the laws of evidence allowed all persons to be sworn in courts of law in the form which they held most binding on their conscience. Lord Lyndhurst succeeded in passing a bill for the admission of Jews to corporate offices. Jews had, as we have already seen, been admitted to the shrievalty and the magistracy in the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign. In 1848 the struggle for their admission to Parliament was renewed, but the Lords still held out and would not pass a bill. Meanwhile influential Jews began to offer themselves as candidates for seats in Parliament. Mr. Salomons contested Shoreham and Maidstone successively and unsuccessfully. In 1847 Baron Lionel Rothschild was elected one of the members for the City of London. He resigned his seat when the House of Lords threw out the Jews' bill, and stood again and was again elected. It was not, however, until 1850 that the struggle was actually transferred to the floor of the House of Commons. In that year Baron Rothschild presented himself at the table of the House as O'Connell had done, and offered to take the oaths in order that he might be admitted to take his seat. For four sessions he had sat as a stranger in the House of which he had been duly elected a member by the votes of one of the most important English constituencies. Now he came boldly up to the table and demanded to be sworn. He was sworn on the Old Testament. He took the Oaths of Allegiance

and Supremacy ; but when the Oath of Abjuration came he omitted from it the words "on the true faith of a Christian." He was directed to withdraw, and it was decided that he could neither sit nor vote unless he would consent to take the oath of abjuration in the fashion prescribed by the law. In other words, he could only sit in the House of Commons on condition of his perjuring himself. Had he sworn "on the true faith of a Christian," the House of Commons, well knowing that he had sworn to a falsehood, would have admitted him as one of its members.

Baron Rothschild quietly fell back to his old position. He sat in one of the seats under the gallery, a place to which strangers are admitted, but where also members occasionally sit. He did not contest the matter any further. Mr. David Salomons was inclined for a rougher and a bolder course. He was elected for Greenwich in 1851, and he presented himself as Baron Rothschild had done. The same thing followed ; he refused to say the words, "on the true faith of a Christian," and he was directed to withdraw. He did withdraw. He sat below the bar. A few evenings after a question was put to the Government by a member friendly to the admission of Jews, Sir Benjamin Hall, afterwards Lord Llanover : "If Mr. Salomons should take his seat, would the Government sue him for the penalties provided by the Act of Parliament in order that the question of right might be tried by a court of law?" Lord John Russell replied on the part of the Government that they did not intend to take any proceedings ; in fact, implied that they considered it no affair of theirs. Then Sir Benjamin Hall announced that Mr. Salomons felt he had no alternative but to take his seat and let the question of right be tested in that way.\* Forthwith, to the amazement and horror of steady old constitutional members, Mr. Salomons, who had been sitting below the bar, calmly got up, walked into the sacred precincts of the House, and took his seat among the members. A tumultuous scene followed. Half the House shouted indignantly to Mr. Salomons to "withdraw, withdraw" ; the other half called out encouragingly to him to keep his place. The perplexity was indescribable. What is to be done with a quiet



and respectable gentleman who insists that he is a member of Parliament, comes and takes his seat in the House and will not withdraw? To be sure if he were an absolute intruder he could be easily removed by the Sergeant-at-Arms and his assistants. But in such a case, unless indeed the intruder was a lunatic, he would hardly think of keeping his place when he had been bidden by authority to take himself off. Mr. Salomons, however, had undoubtedly been elected member for Greenwich by a considerable majority. His constituents believed him to be their lawful representative, and in fact had obtained from him a promise that if elected he would actually take his seat. Even then, perhaps, something might have been done if the House in general had been opposed to the claim of Mr. Salomons and of Greenwich. When Lord Cochrane escaped from prison and presented himself in the House from which he had been expelled, he, too, was ordered to withdraw. He, too, refused to do so. The Speaker directed that he should be removed by force. Cochrane had a giant's strength, and on this occasion he used it like a giant. He struggled hard against the efforts of many officials to remove him, and some of the woodwork of the benches was actually torn from its place before the gallant seaman could be got out of the House. But in the case of Lord Cochrane the general feeling of the House was with the authorities and against the expelled member, who however happened to be in the right while the House was in the wrong. The case of Mr. Salomons was very different. Many members were of opinion, and eminent lawyers were among them, that in the strictest and most technical view of the law, he was entitled to take his seat. Many more were convinced that the principle which excluded him was stupid and barbarous, and that the course he was at present taking was necessary for the purpose of obtaining its immediate repeal.

Therefore any idea of expelling Mr. Salomons was out of the question. The only thing that could be done was to set to work and debate the matter. Lord John Russell moved a resolution to the effect that Mr. Salomons be ordered to withdraw. Lord John Russell, it need hardly

be said, was entirely in favour of the admission of Jews, but thought Mr. Salomons' course irregular. Mr. Bernal Osborne moved an amendment declaring Mr. Salomons entitled to take his seat. A series of irregular discussions, varied and enlivened by motions for adjournment, took place; and Mr. Salomons not only voted in some of the divisions, but actually made a speech. He spoke calmly and well, and was listened to with great attention. He explained that in the course he had taken he was acting in no spirit of contumacy or presumption, and with no disregard for the dignity of the House, but that he had been lawfully elected, and that he felt bound to take his seat for the purpose of asserting his own rights and those of his constituents. He intimated also that he would withdraw if just sufficient force were used to make him feel that he was acting under coercion. The motion that he be ordered to withdraw was carried. The Speaker requested Mr. Salomons to withdraw. Mr. Salomons held his place. The Speaker directed the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove Mr. Salomons. The Sergeant-at-Arms approached Mr. Salomons and touched him on the shoulder, and Mr. Salomons then quietly withdrew. The farce was over. It was evident to every one that Mr. Salomons had virtually gained his object, and that something must soon be done to get the House of Commons and the country out of the difficulty. It is curious that even in ordering him to withdraw, the Speaker called Mr. Salomons "the honourable member."

Mr. Salomons did well to press his rights in that practical way upon the notice of the House. It is one of the blots upon our Parliamentary system that a great question, like that of the removal of Jewish disabilities, is seldom settled upon its merits. Parliament rarely bends to the mere claims of reason and justice. Some pressure has almost always to be put on it to induce it to see the right. Its tendency is always to act exactly as Mr. Salomons himself formally did in this case; to yield only when sufficient pressure has been put on it to signify coercion. Catholic Emancipation was carried by such a pressure. The promoters of the Sunday Trading Bill yield to a riot in Hyde

Park. A Tory Government turn Reformers in obedience to a crowd who pull down the railing of the same enclosure. A Chancellor of the Exchequer modifies his budget in deference to a demonstration of match-selling boys and girls. In all these instances it was right to make the concession; but the concession was not made because it was right. The Irish Home Rulers, or some of them at least, are convinced that they will carry Home Rule in the end by the mere force of a pressure brought to bear on Parliament; and their expectation is justified by all previous experience. They have been told often enough that they must not expect to carry it by argument. If parliamentary institutions do really come to be discredited in this country, as many people love to predict, one especial reason will be this very experience on the part of the public, that Parliament has invariably conceded to pressure the reforms which it persistently denied to justice. A reform is first refused without reason, to be at last conceded without grace.

Mr. Salomons acted wisely therefore for the cause he had at heart when he thrust himself upon the House of Commons. The course taken by Baron Rothschild was more dignified no doubt; but it did not make much impression. The victory seems to us to have been practically won when Mr. Salomons sat down after having addressed the House of Commons from his place among the members. But it was not technically won just then, nor for some time after. Two actions were brought against Mr. Salomons, not by the Government, to recover penalties for his having unlawfully taken his seat. One of the actions was withdrawn, the object of both alike being to get a settlement of the legal question, for which one trial would be as good as twenty. The action came on for trial in the Court of Exchequer, on December 9, 1851, before Mr. Baron Martin and a special jury. Baron Martin suggested that, as the question at issue was one of great importance, a special case should be prepared for the decision of the full court. This was done, and the case came before the court in January 1852. The issue really narrowed itself to this: were the words "on the true faith of a Christian" merely a form of affirmation or were they purposely inserted in order to

obtain a profession of Christian faith? Did not the framers of the measure merely put in such words as at the moment seemed to them most proper to secure a true declaration from the majority of those to be sworn, and with the understanding that in exceptional cases other forms of asseveration might be employed as more suited to other forms of faith? Or were the words put in for the express purpose of making it certain that none but Christians should take the oath? We know as a matter of fact that the words were not put in with any such intention. No one was thinking about the Jews when the asseveration was thus constructed. Still the Court of Exchequer decided by three voices to one that the words must be held in law to constitute a specially Christian oath, which could be taken by no one but a Christian, and without taking which no one could be a Member of Parliament; of that Parliament which had had Bolingbroke for a leader, and Gibbon for a distinguished member.

The legal question then being settled, there were renewed efforts made to get rid of the disabilities by an Act of Parliament. The House of Commons continued to pass Bills to enable Jews to sit in Parliament, and the House of Lords continued to throw them out. Lord John Russell, who had taken charge of the measure, introduced his Bill early in 1858. The Bill was somewhat peculiar in its construction. On a former occasion the House of Lords found another excuse for not passing a measure for the same purpose, in the fact that it mixed up a modification of the Oath of Supremacy with the question of the relief of the Jews. In the present measure the two questions were kept separate. The Bill proposed to reconstruct the oath altogether. Some obsolete words about the Pretender and the Stuart Family were to be taken out. The asseverations relating to succession, supremacy, and allegiance were to be condensed into one oath, to which were added the words "on the true faith of a Christian." Thus far the measure merely reconstructed the form of oath so as to bring it into accord with the existing condition of things. But then there came a separate clause in the Bill, providing that where the oath had to be administered to a Jew

the words "on the true faith of a Christian" might be left out. This was a very sensible and simple way of settling the matter. It provided a rational form of oath for all sects alike; it got rid of obsolete anomalies, and it likewise relieved the Jews from the injustice which had been unintentionally imposed on them. Unfortunately the very convenience of the form in which the Bill was drawn only put, as it will be seen, a new facility into the hands of the anti-reformers in the House of Lords for again endeavouring to get rid of it. Lord John Russell had no difficulty with the House of Commons. He had brought up his Bill in good time, in order that it might reach the House of Lords as quickly as possible; and it passed a second reading in the Commons without any debate. When it came up to the House of Lords, the majority simply struck out the particular clause relating to the Jews. This made the Bill of no account whatever for the purpose it specially had in view. The Commons, on the motion of Lord John Russell, refused to assent to the alteration made by the Lords, and appointed a committee to draw up a statement of their reasons for refusing to agree to it. On the motion of Mr. Duncombe, it was actually agreed that Baron Rothschild should be a member of the committee, although a legal decision had declared him not to be a member of the House. During the debates to which all this led, Lord Lucan made a suggestion of compromise in the House of Lords which proved successful. He recommended the insertion of a clause in the Bill allowing either House to modify the form of oath according to its pleasure. Lord John Russell objected to this way of dealing with a great question, but did not feel warranted in refusing the proposed compromise. A Bill was drawn up with the clause suggested, and it was rattled, if we may use such an expression, through both Houses. It passed with the Oaths Bill, which the Lords had mutilated, and which now stood as an independent measure. A Jew, therefore, might be a member of the House of Commons, if it chose to receive him, and might be shut out of the House of Lords if that House did not think fit to let them in. More than that, the House of Commons might change its mind at any

moment, and by modifying the form of oath shut out the Jews again; or shut out any new Jewish candidates. Of course such a condition of things as that could not endure. An Act passed not long after which consolidated the Acts referring to Oaths of Allegiance, Abjuration, and Supremacy, and enabled Jews on all occasions whatever to omit the words "on the true faith of a Christian." Thus the Jew was at last placed on a position of political equality with his Christian fellow-subjects, and an anomaly and a scandal was removed from our legislation.

About the same time as that which saw Baron Rothschild admitted to take his seat in the House of Commons, the absurd property qualification for Members of Parliament was abolished. This ridiculous system originally professed to secure that no man should be a member of the House of Commons who did not own a certain amount of landed property. The idea of defining a man's fitness to sit in Parliament according to his possession of landed property, was in itself preposterous; but such as the law was it was evaded every day. It had not the slightest real force. Fictitious conveyances were issued as a matter of course. Any one who desired a seat in Parliament could easily find some friend or patron who would convey to him by formal deed the fictitious ownership of landed property enough to satisfy the requirements of the law. This was done usually with as little pretence at concealment as the borrowing of an umbrella. It was perfectly well known to everybody that a great many members of the House of Commons did not possess, and did not even pretend to possess, a single acre of land their own property. What made the thing more absurd was that men who were rich enough to spend thousands of pounds in contesting boroughs and counties, had often to go through this form of having a fictitious conveyance made to them, because they did not happen to have invested any part of their wealth in land. Great city magnates, known for their wealth, and known in many cases for their high personal honour as well, had to submit to this foolish ceremonial. The property qualification was a device of the reign of Anne. The evasions of it became so many and so notorious that

in George II.'s time an Act was passed making it necessary for every member to take an oath that he possessed the requisite amount of property. In the present reign a declaration was substituted for the oath, and it was provided that if a man had not landed property, it would be enough for him to prove that he had funded property to the same amount—£600 a year for counties and £300 for boroughs. The manufacture of fictitious qualifications went on as fast as ever. There were many men in good position, earning large incomes by a profession or otherwise, who yet had not realised money enough to put them in possession of a property of £600 or £300 a year—it might take £10,000 to secure an income of £300 a year; £20,000 to secure £600 a year. Scores of members of Parliament were well known not to have any such means. To make the anomaly more absurd, it should be noted that there was no property qualification in Scotland, and the Scotch members were then, as now, remarkable for their respectability and intelligence. Members for the Universities, too, were elected without a property qualification. Mr. Locke King stated in the House of Commons that after every general election there were from fifty to sixty cases in which it was found that persons had declared themselves to be possessed of the requisite qualification who were notoriously not in possession of it. Many men, too, it was well known, were purposely qualified by wealthy patrons, in order that they might sit in Parliament as mere nominees and political servants.

As usual with Parliament, this anomaly was allowed to go on until a sudden scandal made its abolition necessary. One luckless person, who probably had no position and few friends, was actually prosecuted for having made a false declaration as to his property qualification. He had been a little more indiscreet, or a little more open in his performance, than other people, and he was pounced upon by "old father antic," the law. This practically settled the matter. Every one knew that many other members of Parliament deserved in point of fact just as well as he the three months' imprisonment to which he was sentenced. Mr. Locke King introduced a Bill to abolish the property

qualification hitherto required from the representatives of English and Irish constituencies, and it became law in a few days.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE IONIAN ISLANDS

WHEN Lord Ellenborough abruptly resigned the place of President of the Board of Control he was succeeded by Lord Stanley, who, as we have seen already, became Secretary of State for India, under the new system of government. Lord Stanley had been Secretary for the Colonies, and in this office he was succeeded by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. For some time previously Sir Edward Lytton had been taking so marked a place in parliamentary life as to make it evident that when his party came into power, he was sure to have a chance of distinguishing himself in office. Bulwer's political career had up to this time been little better than a failure. He started in public life as a Radical and a friend of O'Connell; he was indeed the means of introducing Mr. Disraeli to the leader of the Irish party. He began his parliamentary career before the Reform Bill. He was elected for St. Ives in 1831. After the passing of the Bill, he represented Lincoln for several years. At the general election of 1841 he lost his seat, and it was not until July 1852 that he was again returned to Parliament. This time he came in as member for the county of Herts. In the interval many things had happened—to quote the expression of Mr. Disraeli in 1874. Lytton had succeeded to wealth and to landed estates, and he had almost altogether changed his political opinions. From a poetic Radical he had become a poetic Conservative. In the "Parliamentary Companion" for the year 1855 we find him thus quaintly described—by his own hand it may be assumed: "Concurs in the general policy of Lord Derby; would readjust the Income-Tax, and mitigate the duties on Malt, Tea, and Soap; some years ago advo-



cated the Ballot, but seeing its utter inefficiency in France and America can no longer support that theory; will support education on a religious basis, and vote for a repeal of the Maynooth Grant." It will perhaps be assumed from this confession of faith, that Lytton had not very clear views of any kind as to practical politics. It probably seemed a graceful and poetic thing, redolent of youth and Ernest Maltravers, to stand forth as an impassioned Radical in early years; and it was quite in keeping with the progress of Ernest Maltravers to tone down into a thoughtful Conservative opposing the Maynooth Grant and mitigating the duty on Malt and Soap, as one advanced in years, wealth, and gravity. At all events, it was certain that whatever Lytton attempted he would in the end carry to some considerable success. His first years in the House of Commons had come to nothing. When he lost his seat most people fancied that he had accepted defeat, and had turned his back on parliamentary life for ever. But Lytton possessed a marvellously strong will, and had a faith in himself which almost amounted to genius. When he wrote a play which proved a distinct failure, some of the leading critics assured him that he had no dramatic turn at all. He believed on the contrary that he had; and he determined to write another play which should be of all things dramatic, and which should hold the stage. He went to work and produced the "Lady of Lyons"; a play filled with turgid passages and preposterous situations, but which has nevertheless in so conspicuous a degree the dramatic or theatric qualities that it has always held the stage, and has never been wholly extinguished by any change of fashion or of fancy. In much the same way Sir Edward Lytton seems to have made up his mind that he would compel the world to confess him capable of playing the part of a politician. We have in a former chapter of this work alluded to the physical difficulties which stood in the way of his success as a parliamentary speaker, and in spite of which he accomplished his success. He was deaf, and his articulation was so defective that those who heard him speak in public for the first time often found themselves unable to understand him. Such difficulties would assuredly have

scared any ordinary man out of the parliamentary arena for ever. But Lytton seems to have determined that he would make a figure in Parliament. He set himself to public speaking as coolly as if he were a man, like Gladstone or Bright, whom nature had marked out for such a competition by her physical gifts. He became a decided, and even in a certain sense, a great success. He could not strike into a debate actually going on; his defects of hearing shut him off from such a performance; and no man who is not a debater will ever hold a really high position in the House of Commons. But he could review a previous night's arguments in a speech abounding in splendid phrases and brilliant illustrations. He could pass for an orator. He actually did pass for an orator. Mr. Disraeli seems to have admired his speaking with a genuine and certainly a disinterested admiration; for he described it as though it were exactly the kind of eloquence in which he would gladly have himself excelled if he could. In fact, Lytton reached the same relative level in parliamentary debate that he had reached in fiction and the drama. He contrived to appear as if he ought to rank among the best of the craftsmen.

Sir Edward Lytton, as Secretary for the Colonies, seemed resolved to prove by active and original work that he could be a practical colonial statesman as well as a novelist, a playwright, and a parliamentary orator. He founded the Colony of British Columbia, which at first was to comprise all such territories within the Queen's dominions "as are bounded to the South by the frontier of the United States of America, to the East by the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, to the North by Simpson's River and the Finlay branch of the Peace River, and to the West by the Pacific Ocean." It was originally intended that the colony should not include Vancouver's Island; but her Majesty was allowed, on receiving an address from the two Houses of the Legislature of Vancouver's Island, to annex that island to British Columbia. Vancouver's Island was in fact incorporated with British Columbia in 1866, and British Columbia was united with the Dominion of Canada in 1871.

Something, however, more strictly akin to Sir Edward

Lytton's personal tastes was found in the mission to which he invited Mr. Gladstone. There had long been dissatisfaction and even disturbance in the Ionian Islands. These seven islands were constituted a sort of republic or commonwealth by the Treaty of Vienna. But they were consigned to the protectorate of Great Britain, which had the right of maintaining garrisons in them. Great Britain used to appoint a Lord High Commissioner, who was generally a military man, and whose office combined the duties of Commander-in-Chief with those of Civil Governor. The little republic had a Senate of six members and a Legislative Assembly of forty members. It seems almost a waste of words to say that the islanders were not content with British government. For good or ill, the Hellenes wherever they are found are sure to be filled with an impassioned longing for Hellenic independence. The people of the Ionian Islands were eager to be allowed to enter into one system with the kingdom of Greece. It was idle to try to amuse them by telling them they constituted an independent republic, and were actually governing themselves. A duller people than the Greeks of the islands could not be deluded into the idea that they were a self-governing people, while they saw themselves presided over by an English Lord High Commissioner who was also the Commander-in-Chief of a goodly British army garrisoned in their midst. They saw that the Lord High Commissioner had a way of dismissing the republican Parliament whenever he and they could not get on together. They knew that if they ventured to resist his orders, English soldiers would make short work of their efforts at self-assertion. They might, therefore, well be excused if they failed to see much of the independent republic in such a system. It is certain that they got a great deal of material benefit from the presence of the energetic road-making British power. But they wanted to be above all things Greek. Their national principles and aspirations, their personal vanities, their truly Greek restlessness and craving for novelty, all combined to make them impatient of that foreign protectorate which was really foreign government. The popular constitution which had been given to the Septinsular

Republic some ten years before Sir E. B. Lytton's time had enabled Hellenic agitation to make its voice and its claims more effectual. In England after the usual fashion a great many shallow politicians were raising an outcry against the popular constitution, as if it were the cause of all the confusion. Because it enabled discontent to make its voice heard they condemned it as the cause of the discontent. They would have been for silencing the alarm-bell immediately, and then telling themselves that all was safe. As was but natural, local politicians rose to popularity in the islands in proportion as they were loud in their denunciation of foreign rule, and in their demands for union with the kingdom of Greece. Anybody might surely have foretold all this years before. It might have been taken for granted that so long as any sort of independent Greek kingdom held its head above the waters the Greek populations everywhere would sympathise with its efforts, and long to join their destiny with it. Many English public men, however, were merely angry with these pestilential Greeks who did not know what was good for them. A great English journal complained with a simple egotism that was positively touching, that in spite of all argument the National Assembly, the municipalities, and the press of the Ionian Islands had now concentrated their pretensions on the project of a union with the kingdom of Greece. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had not been long enough in office to have become soaked in the ideas of routine. He did not regard the unanimous opinions of the insular legislature, municipalities, and press as evidence merely of the unutterable stupidity or the incurable ingratitude and wickedness of the Ionian populations. He thought the causes of the complaints and the dissatisfaction were well worth looking into, and he resolved on sending a statesman of distinction out to the islands to make the inquiry. Mr. Gladstone had been for some years out of office. He had been acting as an independent supporter of Lord Palmerston's Government. It occurred to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton that Mr. Gladstone was the man best fitted to conduct the inquiry. He was well known to be a sympathiser with the struggles and the hopes of the Greeks generally ;

and it seemed to the new Colonial Secretary that the mere fact of such a man having been appointed would make it clear to the islanders that the inquiry was about to be conducted in no hostile spirit. He offered therefore to Mr. Gladstone the office of Lord High Commissioner Extraordinary to the Ionian Islands, and Mr. Gladstone accepted the offer and its duties. The appointment created much surprise, some anger, and a good deal of ridicule here at home. There seemed to certain minds to be something novel, startling, and positively unseemly in such a proceeding. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had alluded in his despatch to Mr. Gladstone's Homeric scholarship, and this was, in the opinion of some politicians, an outrage upon all the principles and proprieties of routine. This, it was muttered, is what comes of literary men in office. A writer of novels is leader of the House of Commons, and he has another writer of novels at his side as Colonial Secretary, and between them they can think of nothing better than to send a man out to the Ionian Islands to listen to the trash of Greek demagogues, merely because he happens to be fond of reading Homer.

Mr. Gladstone went out to the Ionian Islands, and arrived at Corfu in the November of 1858. He called together the Senate, and endeavoured to satisfy them as to the real nature of his mission. He explained that he had not come there to discuss the propriety of maintaining the English protectorate, but only to inquire into the manner in which the just claims of the Ionian Islands might be secured by means of that protectorate. Mr. Gladstone's visit, however, was not a successful enterprise for those who desired that the protectorate should be perpetual, and that the Ionians should be brought to accept it as inevitable. The population of the islands persisted in regarding him, not as the commissioner of a Conservative English Government, but as "Gladstone the Philhellene." He was received wherever he went with the honours due to a liberator. His path everywhere was made to seem like a triumphal progress. In vain he repeated his assurances that he came to reconcile the islands to the protectorate, and not to deliver them from it. The popular instinct

insisted on regarding him as at least the precursor of their union to the kingdom of Greece. The National Assembly passed a formal *résolution* declaring for union with Greece. All that Mr. Gladstone's persuasions could do was to induce them to appoint a committee, and draw up a memorial to be presented in proper form to the protecting powers. By this time the news of Mr. Gladstone's reception in the islands, and in Athens, to which also he paid a visit, had reached England, and the most extravagant exaggerations were put into circulation. Mr. Gladstone was attacked in an absurd manner. He was accused not merely of having encouraged the pretensions of the Ionian Islanders, but even talked of as if he, and he alone, had been their inspiration. One might have imagined that there was something portentous and even unnatural in a population of Hellenic race feeling anxious to be united with a Greek kingdom instead of being ruled by a British protectorate imposed by the arbitrary decree of a congress of foreign powers. National complacency could hardly push sensible men to greater foolishness than it did when it set half England wondering and raging over the impertinence of a Greek population who preferred union with a Greek kingdom to dependence upon an English protectorate. English writers and speakers went on habitually as if the conduct of the islanders were on a par with that of some graceless daughter who forsakes her father's house for the companionship of strangers, or of some still more guilty wife who deserts her loving husband to associate herself with some strolling musician. There can be no doubt that in every material sense the people of the islands were much better governed under England's protectorate than they could be for generations, probably for centuries, to come under any Greek administration. They had admirable means of communication by land and sea, splendid harbours, regular lines of steamers, excellent roads everywhere, while the people of the kingdom of Greece were hardly better off for all these advantages under Otho than they might have been under Codrus. M. Edmond About declared that the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands were richer, happier, and a hundred times better governed than the subjects of King Otho.

M. About detested Greece and all about it ; but his testimony thus far is that of the most enthusiastic Philhellene. Indeed it seems a waste of words to say, that where Englishmen ruled they would take care to have good roads and efficient lines of steamers. But M. About was mistaken in assuming that the populations of the islands were happier under British rule than they would have been under that of a Greek kingdom. Such a remark only showed a want of the dramatic sympathy which understands the feelings of others, and which we especially look for in a writer of any sort of fiction. M. About would not have been so successful a romancist if he had always acted on the assumption that people are made happy by the material conditions which, in the opinion of other people, ought to confer happiness. He would not, we presume, admit that the people of Alsace and Lorraine are happier under the Germans than they were under the French, even though it were to be proved beyond dispute that the Germans made better roads and managed more satisfactorily the lines of railway.

The populations of the islands persevered in the belief that they understood better what made them happy than M. About could do. The visit of Mr. Gladstone, whatever purpose it may have been intended to fulfil, had the effect of making them agitate more strenuously than ever for annexation to the kingdom of Greece. Their wish, however, was not to be granted yet. A new Lord High Commissioner was sent out after Mr. Gladstone's return, doubtless with instructions to satisfy what was supposed to be public opinion at home by a little additional stringency in maintaining the connection between Great Britain and the protected populations. Still, however, the idea held ground that sooner or later Great Britain would give up the charge of the islands. A few years after an opportunity occurred for making the cession. The Greeks got rid quietly of their heavy German king Otho, and on the advice chiefly of England they elected as sovereign a brother of the Princess of Wales. The Greeks themselves were not very eager for any other experiment in the matter of royalty. They seemed as if they thought they had had

enough of it. But the Great Powers, and more especially England, pressed upon them that they could never be really respectable if they went without a king; and they submitted to the dictates of conventionality. They first asked for Prince Alfred of England, now Duke of Edinburgh; but the arrangements of European diplomacy did not allow of a prince of any of the great reigning houses being set over Greece. In any case, nothing can be less likely than that an English Prince would have accepted such a responsibility. The French Government made some significant remark, to the effect that if it were possible for any of the Great Powers to allow one of their princes to accept the Greek crown, France had a prince disengaged, who she thought might have at least as good a claim as another. This was understood to be Prince Napoleon, son of Jerome, King of Westphalia, a prince of whom a good deal was heard after, as a good deal had been heard before, in the politics of Europe. The suggestion then about the prince of the House of Denmark was made either by or to the Greeks, and it was accepted. The second son of the King of Denmark was made King of Greece; and Lord John Russell, on behalf of the English Government, then handed over to the kingdom of Greece the islands of which Great Britain had had so long to bear the unwilling charge, and the retention of which, according to some uneasy politicians, was absolutely necessary alike to the national safety and the imperial glory of England. This is anticipating by a few years the movement of time; but the effects of Mr. Gladstone's visit so distinctly foreshadowed the inevitable result that it is not worth while dividing into two parts this little chapter of our history. Mr. Gladstone's visit, the mistaken interpretation put upon it by the islanders, and the reception which chiefly on account of that mistake he had among them, must have made it clear to every intelligent person in England that this country could not long continue to force her protectorate upon a reluctant population over whom it could not even claim the right of conquest. It ought to have been plain to all the world that England could not long consent, with any regard for her own professions and principles, to play the part of



Europe's gaoler or man in possession. The cession of the Ionian Islands marked, however, the furthest point of progress attained for many years in that liberal principle of foreign policy which recognises fairness and justice as motives of action more imperative than national vanity, or the imperial pride of extended possession. England had to suffer for some time under the influence of a reaction which the cession of the islands, all just and prudent though it was, unquestionably helped to bring about.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE TORY DIOGENES ROLLING HIS TUB

THERE was once, we read, a mighty preparation for war going on in Athens. Everybody was busy in arrangement of some kind to meet the needs of coming battle. Diogenes had nothing in particular to do, but was unwilling to appear absolutely idle when all else were so busy. He set to work, therefore, with immense clatter and energy to roll his tub up and down the streets of Athens. The Conservative Government, seeing Europe all in disturbance and having nothing very particular to do, began to roll a tub of their own, and to show a preternatural and wholly unnecessary activity in doing so.

The year 1859 was one of storm and stress on the European continent. The war-drum throbbed through the whole of it. The year began with the memorable declaration of the Emperor of the French to the Austrian Ambassador at the Tuileries that the relations between the two Empires were not such as he could desire. This he said, according to the description given of the event in a despatch from Lord Cowley, "with some severity of tone." In fact Count Cavour had had his way. He had prevailed upon Louis Napoleon, and the result was a determination to expel the Austrians from Italy. It seems clear enough that the Emperor, after a while, grew anxiously inclined to draw back from the position in which he had placed

himself. Great pressure was brought to bear upon him by the English Government, and by other Governments as well, to induce him to refrain from disturbing the peace of Europe. He was probably quite sincere in the assurances he repeatedly gave that he was doing his best to prevent a rupture with Austria; and he would possibly have given much to avoid the quarrel. The turn of his mind was such that he scarcely ever formed any resolution or entered into any agreement but the moment the step was taken he began to see reasons for wishing that he had followed a different course. In this instance it is evident that he started at the sound himself had made. It was not, however, any longer in his power to guide events. He was in the hands of a stronger will and a more daring spirit than his own. In the career of Count Cavour our times have seen perhaps the most remarkable illustration of that great Italian statesmanship which has always appeared at intervals in the history of Europe. There may be very different opinions about the political morality of Cavour. Rather, indeed, may it be said that his strongest admirer is forced to invent a morality of his own, in order to justify all the political actions of a man who knew no fear, hesitation, or scruple. Cavour had the head of a Machiavelli, the daring of a Cæsar Borgia, the political craft and audacity of a Richelieu. He was undoubtedly a patriot and a lover of his country; but he was willing to serve his country by means from which the conscience of modern Europe, even as it shows itself in the business of statesmanship, is forced to shrink back. If ends were to justify means, then the history of united Italy may be the justification of the life of Cavour; but until ends are held to justify means one can only say that he did marvellous things; that he broke up and reconstructed political systems; that he made a nation; that he realised the dreams of Dante, and some of the schemes of Alexander VI., and that he accomplished all this for the most part at the cost of other people, and not of Italians. Louis Napoleon was simply a weapon in the hands of such a man. Cavour knew precisely what he wanted, and was prepared to go all lengths and to run all risks to have it.

When once the French Emperor had entered into a compact with him there was no escape from it.

Cavour did not look like an Italian; at least a typical Italian. He looked more like an Englishman. He reminded Englishmen oddly of Dickens's *Pickwick*, with his large forehead, his general look of moony good-nature, and his spectacles. That commonplace homely exterior concealed unsurpassed force of character, subtlety of scheming, and power of will. Cavour was determined that France should fight Austria. If Louis Napoleon had shown any decided inclination to draw back, Cavour would have flung Piedmont single-handed into the fight, and defied France, after what had passed, to leave her to her fate. Louis Napoleon dared not leave Piedmont to her fate. He had gone too far with Cavour for that. The war between France and Austria broke out. It was over, one might say, in a moment. Austria had no generals; the French army rushed to success; and then Louis Napoleon stopped short as suddenly as he had begun. He had proclaimed that he went to war to set Italy free from the Alps to the sea; but he made peace on the basis of the liberation of Lombardy from Austrian rule, and he left Venetia for another day and for other arms. He drew back before the very serious danger that threatened on the part of the German States, who showed ominous indications of a resolve to make the cause of Austria their own if France went too far. He held his hand from Venetia because of Prussia; seven years later Prussia herself gave Venetia to Italy.

The English Government had made futile attempts to prevent the outbreak of war. Lord Malmesbury had elaborated quires of heavy commonplace in the vain hope that the great conflicting forces then let loose could be brought back into quietude by the gentle charm of plenteous platitude. Meanwhile the Conservative Government could not exactly live on the mere reputation of having given good advice abroad to which no one would listen. They had to do something more at home. They began to roll a tub. While Europe was aflame with war-passion and panic, the Conservatives determined to try their hand at a Reform Bill. Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House of

Commons, knew that a Reform Bill was one of the certainties of the future. It suited him well enough to praise the perfection of existing institutions in his parliamentary and platform speeches; but no one knew better than he that the Reform Bill of 1832 had left some blanks that must be, one day or another, filled up by some Government. Lord John Russell had made an attempt more than once and failed. He had tried a Reform Bill in 1852, and lost his chance because of the defeat of the Ministry on the Militia Bill; he had tried another experiment in 1854, but the country was too eager about war with Russia to care for domestic reform, and Lord John Russell had to abandon the attempt, not without an emotion which he could not succeed in concealing. Mr. Disraeli knew well enough that whenever Lord John Russell happened to be in power again he would return to his first love in politics, a Reform Bill. He knew also that a refusal to have anything to do with reform would always expose the Tories in office to a coalition of all the Liberal factions against them. At present he could not pretend to think that his party was strong. The Conservatives were in office, but they were not in power. At any moment, if the Liberals chose, a motion calling for reform, or censuring the Government because they were doing nothing for reform, might be brought forward in the House of Commons and carried in the teeth of the Tory party. Mr. Disraeli had to choose between two dangers. He might risk all by refusing reform; he might risk all by attempting reform. He thought on the whole the wiser course would be to endeavour to take possession of the reform question for himself and his party.

The reappearance of Mr. Bright in politics stimulated no doubt this resolve on the part of the Conservative leader. We speak only of the one leader; for it is not likely that the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, took any active interest in the matter. Lord Derby had outlived political ambition, or he had had perhaps all the political success he cared for. There was not much to tempt him into a new reform campaign. Times had changed since his fiery energy went so far to stimulate the Whigs of that day into enthusiasm

for the Bill of Lord Grey. Lord Derby had had nearly all in life that such a man could desire. He had station of the highest; he had wealth and influence; he had fame as a great parliamentary debater. Now that Brougham had ceased to take any leading part in debate he had no rival in the House of Lords. He had an easy, buoyant temperament; he was, as we have said already, something of a scholar, and he loved the society of his Homer and his Horace, while he could enjoy out-door amusements as well as any Squire Western or Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone of them all. He was a sincere man without any pretence; and, if he did not himself care about reform, he was not likely to put on any appearance of enthusiasm about it. Nor did he set much store on continuing in office. He would be the same Lord Derby out of office as in. It is probable, therefore, that he would have allowed reform to go its way for him, and never troubled; and if loss of office came of his indifference he would have gone out of office with unabated cheerfulness. But this way of looking at things was by no means suitable to his energetic and ambitious lieutenant. Mr. Disraeli had not nearly attained the height of his ambition, nor had he by any means exhausted his political energies. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, was not a man to view with any satisfaction the consequences likely to come to the Conservative party from an open refusal to take up the cause of reform. He had always, too, measured fairly and accurately the popular influence and the parliamentary strength of Mr. Bright. It is clear that, at a time when most of the Conservatives, and not a few of the Whigs, regarded Mr. Bright as only an eloquent and respectable demagogue, Mr. Disraeli had made up his mind that the Manchester orator was a man of genius and foresight, who must be taken account of as a genuine political power. Mr. Bright now returned to public life. He had for a long time been withdrawn by ill-health from all share in political agitation, or politics of any kind. At one time it was indeed fully believed that the House of Commons had seen the last of him. To many his return to Parliament and the platform seemed almost like a resurrection. Almost immediately on his

returning to public life he flung himself into a new agitation for reform. He addressed great meetings in the north of England and in Scotland, and he was induced to draw up a Reform Bill of his own. His scheme was talked of at that time by some of his opponents as though it were a project of which Jack Cade might have approved. It was practically a proposal to establish a franchise precisely like that which we have now, ballot and all, only that it threw the expenses of the returning officer on the county or borough rate, and it introduced a somewhat large measure of redistribution of seats. The opponents of reform were heard everywhere assuring themselves and their friends that the country in general cared nothing about reform. Mr. Bright himself was accredited with having said that his own effort to arouse a reforming spirit even in the North was like flogging a dead horse. But Mr. Disraeli was far too shrewd to be satisfied with such consolations as his followers would thus have administered. He knew well enough that the upper and middle classes cared very little about a new Reform Bill. They had had all the reform they wanted in 1832. But, so long as the Bill of 1832 remained unsupplemented, it was evident that any political party could appeal to the support of the working-classes throughout the country in favour of any movement which promised to accomplish that object. In short, Mr. Disraeli knew that reform had to come some time, and he was resolved to make his own game if he could.

This time, however, he was not successful. The difficulties in his way were too great. It would have been impossible for him to introduce such a Reform Bill as Mr. Bright would be likely to accept. His own party would not endure such a proposition. He could only go so far as to bring in some Bill which might possibly seem to reformers to be doing something for reform, and at the same time might be commended to Conservatives on the ground that it really did nothing for it. Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill was a curiosity. It offered a variety of little innovations which nobody wanted or could have cared about, and it left out of sight altogether the one reform which alone gave an excuse for any legislation. We have

explained more than once that Lord Grey's Reform Bill admitted the middle-class to legislation but left the working-class out. What was now wanted was a measure to let the working-class in. Nobody seriously pretended that any other object than this was sought by those who called out for reform. Yet Mr. Disraeli's scheme made no more account of the working-class as a whole than if they already possessed the vote every man of them. It proposed to give a vote in boroughs to persons who had property to the amount of £10 a year in the funds, Bank stock or East India stock ; to persons who had £60 in a Savings Bank ; to persons receiving pensions in the naval, military, or civil service, amounting to £20 a year ; to professional men, to graduates of universities, ministers of religion, and certain schoolmasters ; in fact, to a great number of persons who either already had the franchise or could have it if they had any interest that way. The only proposition in the Bill not absolutely farcical and absurd was that which would have equalised the franchise in counties and in boroughs, making £10 the limit in each alike. The English working-classes cried out for the franchise, and Mr. Disraeli proposed to answer the cry by giving the vote to graduates of universities, medical practitioners, and schoolmasters.

Yet we may judge of the difficulties Mr. Disraeli had to deal with by the reception which even this poor little measure met with from some of his own colleagues. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley resigned office rather than have anything to do with it. Mr. Henley was a specimen of the class who might have been described as fine old English gentlemen. He was shrewd, blunt, honest, and narrow, given to broad jokes and to arguments flavoured with a sort of humour which reminded not very faintly of the drollery of Fielding's time. Mr. Walpole was a man of gentle bearing, not by any means a robust politician, nor liberally endowed with intellect or eloquence, but pure-minded and upright enough to satisfy the most exacting. Mr. Walpole wrote to Lord Derby a letter which had a certain simple dignity and pathos in it, to explain the reason for his resignation. He frankly said that the

measure which the Cabinet were prepared to recommend was one which they should all of them have stoutly opposed if either Lord Palmerston or Lord John Russell had ventured to bring it forward. This seemed to Mr. Walpole reason enough for his declining to have anything to do with it. It did not appear to him honourable to support a measure because it had been taken up by one's own party, which the party would assuredly have denounced and opposed to the uttermost if it had been brought forward by the other side. Mr. Walpole's colleagues no doubt respected his scruples, but some probably regarded them with good-natured contempt. Such a man, it was clear, was not destined to make much of a way in politics. Public opinion admired Mr. Walpole, and applauded his decision. Public opinion would have pronounced even more strongly in his favour had it known that at the time of his making this decision and withdrawing from a high official position Mr. Walpole was in circumstances which made the possession of a salary of the utmost importance to him. Had he even swallowed his scruples and held on a little longer, he would have become entitled to a pension. He did not appear to have hesitated a moment. He was a high-minded gentleman; he could very well bear to be poor; he could not bear to surrender his self-respect.

This resignation, so honourable to Mr. Walpole and to Mr. Henley, will serve to show how great were the difficulties which then stood in Mr. Disraeli's way. Probably Mr. Disraeli's own feelings were in favour of a liberally extended suffrage. It is not a very rash assumption to conjecture that he looked with contempt on the kind of reasoning which fancied that the safety of a state depends upon the narrowness of its franchise. But this Bill bore the character of a measure brought in with the object of trying to reconcile irreconcilable claims and principles. To be the author of something which should give the Government the credit with their opponents of being reformers at heart, and with their friends of being non-reformers at heart, was apparently the object of Mr. Disraeli. The attempt was a complete failure. It was vain to preach



up the beauty of "lateral extension" of the franchise as opposed to extension downwards. The country saw through the whole imposture at a glance. One of Mr. Disraeli's defects as a statesman has always been that he is apt to be just a little too clever for the business he has in hand. This ingenious Reform Bill was a little too clever. More matter and less art would have served its turn. It was found out in a moment. Some one described its enfranchising clauses as "fancy franchises"; Mr. Bright introduced the phrase to the House of Commons, and the clauses never recovered the epithet. The Savings Bank clause provoked immense ridicule. Suppose, it was asked, a man draws out a few pounds to get married, or to save his aged parent from starvation, or to help a friend out of difficulties, is it fair that he should be immediately disfranchised as a penalty for being loving and kindly? One does not want to make the electoral franchise a sort of Monthyon prize for the most meritorious of any class; but still is it reasonable that a man who is to have a vote as long as he hoards his little sum of money is to forfeit the vote the moment he does a kind or even a prudent thing? Even as a matter of mere prudence, it was very sensibly argued, is it not better that a man should do something else with his money than invest it in a Savings Bank, which is after all only a safer version of the traditional old stocking? It would be useless to go into any of the discussions which took place on this extraordinary Bill. It can hardly be said to have been considered seriously. It had to be got rid of somehow, and therefore Lord John Russell moved an amendment, declaring that no readjustment of the franchise would satisfy the House of Commons or the country which did not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than was contemplated in the Government measure. Perhaps the most remarkable speech made during the debate was that of Mr. Gladstone, who, accepting neither the Bill nor the resolution, occupied himself chiefly with an appeal to Parliament and public opinion on behalf of small boroughs. The argument was ingenious. It pointed to the number of eminent men who had been

enabled to begin public life very early by means of a nomination for some pocket-borough, or who, having quarrelled with the constituents of a city or county, might for a while have been exiled from Parliament if some pocket-borough, or rather pocket-borough's master, had not admitted them by that little postern-gate. The argument went no further than to show that in a civilised country every anomaly, however absurd, may be turned to some good account. If instead of creating small pocket-boroughs the English constitutional system had conferred on a few great peers the privilege of nominating members of Parliament directly by their own authority, this arrangement would undoubtedly work well in some cases. Beyond all question some of these privileged peers would send into Parliament deserving men who otherwise might be temporarily excluded from it. The same thing would sometimes happen no doubt if they made over the nomination to their wives or their wives' waiting-women. But the system of pocket-boroughs, taken as a whole, was stuffed with injustice and corruption. It worked direct evil in twenty cases for every one case in which it brought about indirect good. The purchase of seats in the Parliament of Paris undoubtedly did good in some cases. Some of the men for whom seats were bought proved themselves useful and impartial members of that curious tribunal.

Lord John Russell's resolution was carried by a majority of 330 against 291, or a majority of 39. The Government dissolved Parliament, and appealed to the country. The elections did not excite very much public interest. They took place during the most critical moments of the war between France and Austria. While such news was arriving as that of the defeat of Magenta, the defeat of Solferino, the entrance of the Emperor of the French and the King of Sardinia into Milan, it was not likely that domestic news of a purely parliamentary interest could occupy all the attention of Englishmen. It was not merely a great foreign war that the people of these islands looked on with such absorbing interest. It was what seemed to be the birth of a new era for Europe. There were some who felt inclined

to echo the celebrated saying of Pitt after Austerlitz, and declare that we might as well roll up the map of Europe. In the victories of the French many saw the first indications of the manifest destiny of the heir of Waterloo, the man who represented a defeat. To many the strength of the Austrian military system had seemed the great bulwark of Conservatism in Europe; and now that was gone, shrivelled like a straw in fire, shattered like a potsherd. Surprise, bewilderment, rather than partisan passion of any kind, predominated over England. In such a condition of things the general election passed over hardly noticed. When it was over, it was found that the Conservatives had gained indeed, but had not gained nearly enough to enable them to hold office, unless by the toleration of their rivals. The rivals soon made up their minds that they had tolerated them long enough. A meeting of the Liberal party was held at Willis's Rooms, once the scene of Almack's famous assemblies. There the chiefs of the Liberal party met to adjust their several disputes, and to arrange on some plan of united action. Lord Palmerston represented one section of the party, Lord John Russell another. Mr. Sidney Herbert spoke for the Peelites. Not a few persons were surprised to find Mr. Bright among the speakers. It was well known that he liked Lord Palmerston little; that it could hardly be said he liked the Tories any less. But Mr. Bright was for a Reform Bill, from whomsoever it should come; and he thought, perhaps, that the Liberal chiefs had learned a lesson. The party contrived to agree upon a principle of action, and a compact was entered into, the effect of which was soon made clear at the meeting of the new Parliament. A vote of want of confidence was at once moved by the Marquis of Hartington, eldest son of the Duke of Devonshire, and even then marked out by common report as a future leader of the Liberal party. Lord Hartington had sat but a short time in the House of Commons, and had thus far given no indications of any eloquence, or even of any taste for politics. Nothing could more effectively illustrate one of the peculiarities of the English political system than the choice of the Marquis

of Hartington as the figurehead of this important movement against the Tory Government. Lord Hartington did not then, nor for many years afterwards, show any greater capacity for politics than is shown by an ordinary county member. He seemed rather below than above the average of the House of Commons. As leader subsequently of the Liberal party in that House, he can hardly be said to have shown as yet any higher qualities than a strong good sense and a manly firmness of purpose, combined with such skill in debate as constant practice under the most favourable circumstances must give to any man not absolutely devoid of all capacity for self-improvement. But even of the moderate abilities which Lord Hartington proved that he possessed in the Conservative Parliament of 1874, he had given no indication in 1859. He was put up to move the vote of want of confidence as the heir of the great Whig house of Devonshire; his appearance in the debate would have carried just as much significance with it if he had simply moved his resolution without an accompanying word. The debate that followed was long and bitter. It was enlivened by more than even the usual amount of personalities. Mr. Disraeli and Sir James Graham had a sharp passage of arms, in the course of which Sir James Graham used an expression that has been often quoted since. He described Mr. Disraeli as "the Red Indian of debate," who, "by the use of the tomahawk had cut his way to power, and by recurrence to the scalping system hopes to prevent the loss of it." The scalping system, however, did not succeed this time. The division, when it came on after three nights of discussion, showed a majority of 13 in favour of Lord Hartington's motion. The result surprised no one. Everybody knew that the moment the various sections of the Liberal party contrived a combination the fate of the Ministry was sealed. Willis's Rooms had anticipated the decision of St. Stephen's. Rather, perhaps, might it be said that St. Stephen's had only recorded the decision of Willis's Rooms.

The Queen invited Lord Granville to form a Ministry. Lord Granville was still a young man to be Prime Minister

considering how much the habits of parliamentary life had changed since the days of Pitt. He was not much over forty years of age. He had filled many ministerial offices, however, and had an experience in Parliament which may be said to have begun with his majority. After some nine years spent in the House of Commons, the death of his father called him in 1846 to the House of Lords. He made no assumption of commanding abilities, nor had he any pretence to the higher class of eloquence or statesmanship. But he was a thorough man of the world and of Parliament; he understood English ways of feeling and of acting; he was a clever debater, and had the genial art—very useful and very rare in English public life—of keeping even antagonists in good humour. Probably a better man could not have been found to suit all parties as Prime Minister of England, in times when there was no particular stress or strain to try the energies and the patience of the country. Still there was some surprise felt that the Queen should have passed over two men of years and of fame like Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, and have invited a much younger man at such a moment to undertake for the first time to form a Ministry. An explanation was soon given on the part of the Queen, or at least with her consent. The Queen had naturally thought, in the first instance, of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell; but she found it “a very invidious and unwelcome task” to make a choice between “two statesmen so full of years and honours, and possessing so just a claim on her consideration.” Her Majesty, therefore, thought a compromise might best be got at between the more Conservative section of the Liberal party, which Lord Palmerston appeared to represent, and the more popular section led by Lord John Russell, if both could be united under the guidance of Lord Granville, the acknowledged leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords. The attempt was not successful. Lord John Russell declined to serve under Lord Granville, but declared himself perfectly willing to serve under Lord Palmerston. This declaration at once put an end to Lord Granville’s chances, and to the whole difficulty which had

been anticipated. There had been a coldness for some time between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell. The two men were undoubtedly rivals ; at least all the world persisted in regarding them in such a light. It was not thought possible that Lord John Russell would submit to take office under Lord Palmerston. On this occasion, however, as upon others, Lord John Russell showed a spirit of self-abnegation for which the public in general did not give him credit. The difficulty was settled to the satisfaction of every one, Lord Granville included. Lord Granville was not in the slightest degree impatient to become Prime Minister, and indeed probably felt relieved from a very unwelcome responsibility when he was allowed to accept office under the premiership of Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston was now Prime Minister for life. Until his death he held the office with the full approval of Conservatives as well as Liberals ; nay, indeed, with much warmer approbation from the majority of the Conservatives than from many of the Liberals.

Palmerston formed a strong Ministry. Mr. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Lord John Russell had the office of Foreign Secretary ; Sir G. C. Lewis was Home Secretary ; Mr. Sidney Herbert Minister for War. The Duke of Newcastle took charge of the Colonies, Mr. Cardwell accepted the Irish Secretaryship, and Sir Charles Wood was Secretary for India. Lord Palmerston endeavoured to propitiate the Manchester Liberals by offering a seat in the Government to Mr. Cobden and to Mr. Milner Gibson. Mr. Cobden was at the time on his way home from the United States. In his absence he had been elected member for Rochdale ; and in his absence, too, the office of President of the Board of Trade in the new Ministry had been put at his disposal. His friends eagerly awaited his return, and, when the steamer bringing him home was near Liverpool, a number of them went out to meet him before his landing. They boarded the steamer, and astonished him with the news that the Tories were out, that the Liberals were in, that he was member for Rochdale, and that Lord Palmerston had offered him a place in the new Ministry. Cobden took the news

which related to himself with his usual quiet modesty. He declined to say anything about the offer he had received from Lord Palmerston until he should have the opportunity of giving his answer directly to Lord Palmerston himself. This, of course, was only a necessary courtesy, and most of Cobden's friends were of opinion that he ought to accept Lord Palmerston's offer. Cobden explained afterwards that the office put at his disposal was exactly that which would have best suited him, and in which he thought that he could do some good. He also declared frankly that the salary attached to the office would be a consideration of much importance to him. Mr. Cobden's friends were well aware that he had invested the greater part of his property in American railways, which just then were not very profitable investments, although in the long-run they justified his confidence in their success. At the moment he was a poor man. Yet he did not in his own mind hesitate a moment about Lord Palmerston's offer. He disapproved of Palmerston's foreign policy, of his military expenditure, and his love of interfering in the disputes of the Continent; and he felt that he could not conscientiously accept office under such a leader. He refused the offer decisively, and the chief promoter of the repeal of the corn laws never held any place in an English Administration. Cobden, however, advised his friend, Mr. Milner Gibson, to avail himself of Lord Palmerston's offer, and Mr. Gibson acted on the advice. The opinions of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Gibson were the same on most subjects, but Mr. Gibson had never stood out before the country in so conspicuous a position as an opponent of Lord Palmerston. Perhaps Cobden's advice was given in the spirit of Dr. Parr, who encouraged a modest friend to adopt the ordinary pronunciation of the Egyptian city's name. "Dr. Bentley and I, sir, must call it Alexandria; but I think you may call it Alexandria."

Mr. Cobden felt really grateful to Lord Palmerston for his offer, and for his manner of making it. "I had no personal feeling whatever," he said to his constituents at Rochdale "in the course I took with regard to Lord

Palmerston's offer. If I had had any feeling of personal hostility, which I never had towards him, for he is of that happy nature which cannot create a personal enemy, his kind and manly offer would have instantly disarmed me." Lord Palmerston had not made any tender of office to Mr. Bright; and he wrote to Mr. Bright frankly explaining his reasons. Mr. Bright had been speaking out too strongly, during his recent reform campaign, to make his presence in the Cabinet acceptable to some of the Whig magnates for whom seats had to be found. It is curious to notice now the conviction, which at that time seemed to be universal, that Mr. Cobden was a much more moderate reformer than Mr. Bright. The impression was altogether wrong. There was, in Mr. Bright's nature, a certain element of Conservatism which showed itself clearly enough the moment the particular reforms which he thought necessary were carried; Mr. Cobden would have gone on advancing in the direction of reform as long as he lived. It was Mr. Cobden's conciliatory manner, and an easy genuine *bonhomie*, worthy of Palmerston himself, that made the difference between the two men in popular estimation. Not much difference, to be sure, was ever to be noticed between them in public affairs. Only once had they voted in opposite lobbies of the House of Commons, and that was, if we are not mistaken, on the Maynooth grant; and Mr. Bright afterwards adopted the views of Mr. Cobden. But where there was any difference, even of speculative opinion, Mr. Cobden went further than Mr. Bright along the path of Radicalism. Mr. Cobden's sweet temper and good-humoured disposition made it hard for him to express strong opinions in tones of anger. It is doubtful whether a man of his temperament ever could be a really great orator. Indignation is even more effective as an element in the making of great speeches than in the making of small verses.

The closing days of the year were made memorable by the death of Macaulay. He had been raised to the peerage, and had had some hopes of being able to take occasional part in the stately debates of the House of Lords. But his health almost suddenly broke down, and his voice was



never heard in the Upper Chamber. He died prematurely, having only entered on his sixtieth year. We have already studied the literary character of this most successful literary man. Macaulay had had, as he often said himself, a singularly happy life, although it was not without its severe losses and its griefs. His career was one of uninterrupted success. His books brought him fame, influence, social position, and wealth, all at once. He never made a failure. The world only applauded one book more than the other, the second speech more than the first. Macaulay the essayist, Macaulay the historian, Macaulay the ballad-writer Macaulay the parliamentary orator, Macaulay the brilliant inexhaustible talker—he was alike, it might appear, supreme in everything he chose to do or to attempt. After his death there came a natural reaction; and the reaction, as is always the case, was inclined to go too far. People began to find out that Macaulay had done too many things; that he did not do anything as it might have been done; that he was too brilliant; that he was only brilliant; that he was not really brilliant at all, but only superficial and showy. The disparagement was more unjust by far than even the extravagant estimate. Macaulay was not the paragon, the ninth wonder of the world, for which people once set him down; but he was undoubtedly a great literary man. He was also a man of singularly noble character. He was, in a literary sense, egotistic; that is to say, he thought and talked and wrote a great deal about his works and himself; but he was one of the most unselfish men that ever lived. He appears to have enjoyed advancement, success, fame, and money only because these enabled him to give pleasure and support to the members of his family. He was attached to his family, especially to his sisters, with the tenderest affection. His real nature seems only to have thoroughly shone out when in their society. There he was loving, sportive even to joyous frolicsomeness; a glad schoolboy almost to the very end. He was remarkably generous and charitable, even to strangers; his hand was almost always open; but he gave so unostentatiously that it was not until after his death half his kindly deeds became known. He had a spirit which

was absolutely above any of the corrupting temptations of money and rank. He was very poor at one time ; and during his poverty he was beginning to make his reputation in the House of Commons. It is often said that a poor man feels nowhere so much out of place, nowhere so much at a disadvantage, nowhere so much humiliated, as in the House of Commons. Macaulay felt nothing of the kind. He bore himself as easily and steadfastly as though he had been the eldest son of a proud and wealthy family. It did not seem to have occurred to him, when he was poor, that money was lacking to the dignity of his intellect and his manhood ; or when he was rich that money added to it. Certain defects of temper and manner, rather than of character, he had which caused men often to misunderstand him, and sometimes to dislike him. He was apt to be overbearing in tone, and to show himself a little too confident of his splendid gifts and acquirements : his marvellous memory, his varied reading, his overwhelming power of argument. He trampled on men's prejudices too heedlessly, was inclined to treat ignorance as if it were a crime, and to make dulness feel that it had cause to be ashamed of itself. Such defects as these are hardly worth mentioning, and would not be mentioned here but that they serve to explain some of the misconceptions which were formed of Macaulay by many during his lifetime, and some of the antagonisms which he unconsciously created. Absolutely without literary affectation, undepressed by early poverty, unspoiled by later and almost unequalled success, he was an independent, quiet, self-relying man who, in all his noon of fame, found most happiness in the companionship and the sympathy of those he loved, and who, from first to last, was loved most tenderly by those who knew him best. He was buried in Westminster Abbey in the first week of the new year, and there truly took his place among his peers.

## CHAPTER XLI'

## THE FRENCH TREATY AND THE PAPER DUTIES

LORD PALMERSTON'S Ministry came into power in troublous times. All over the world there seemed to be an upheaving of old systems. Since 1848 there had not been such a period of political and social commotion. A new war had broken out in China. The peace of Villafranca had only patched up the Italian system. Every one saw that there was much convulsion to come yet before Italy was likely to settle down into order. From across the Atlantic came the first murmurings of civil war. John Brown had made his famous raid into Harper's Ferry, a town on the borders of Virginia and Maryland, for the purpose of helping slaves to escape, and he was captured, tried for the attempt, and executed. He met his death with the composure of an antique hero. Victor Hugo declared in one of his most impassioned sentences, that the gibbet of John Brown was the Calvary of the anti-slavery movement; and assuredly the execution of the brave old man was the death sentence of slavery. Abraham Lincoln had just been adopted by the National Republican Convention at Chicago as candidate for the Presidency, and even here in England people were beginning to understand what that meant. At home there were distractions of other kinds. Some of the greatest strikes ever known in England had just broken out; and a political panic was further perplexed by the quarrels of class with class. A profound distrust of Louis Napoleon prevailed almost everywhere. The fact that he had been recently our ally did not do much to diminish this distrust. On the contrary, it helped in a certain sense to increase it. Against what State, it was asked, did he enter into alliance with us? Against Russia. To defend Turkey? Not at all; Louis Napoleon always acknowledged that he despised the Turks, and felt sure nothing could ever be made of them. It was to have his revenge for Moscow and the Beresina, people said, that he struck

at Russia ; and he made us his mere tools in the enterprise. Now he turns upon Austria, to make her atone for other wrongs done against the ambition of the Bonapartes ; and he has conquered. Austria, believed by all men to have the greatest military organisation in Europe, lies crushed at his feet. What next ? Prussia perhaps—or England ? The official classes in this country had from the first been in sympathy with Austria, and would if they could have had England take up her quarrel. The Tories were Austrian for the most part. Not much of the feeling for Italy which was afterwards so enthusiastic and effusive had yet sprung up in England among the Liberals and the bulk of the population. People did not admit that it was an affair of Italy at all ; they saw in it rather an evidence of the ambition of Piedmont. When, soon after the close of the short war, it became known that Sardinia was to pay for the alliance of France by the surrender of Nice and Savoy, the indignation in this country became irrepressible. The whole thing seemed a base transaction. The House of Savoy, said an indignant orator in Parliament, had sprung from the womb of those mountains ; its connection with them should be as eternal as the endurance of the mountains themselves. Men saw in the conduct of Louis Napoleon only an evidence of the most ignoble rapacity. It is of no use, they said, talking of alliances and cordial understandings with such a man. There is in him no faith and no scruple. *Cras mihi*. To-morrow he will try to humble and to punish England as he has already humbled and punished Austria ; his alliance with us will prove to be of as much account as did his alliance with Sardinia. He did not scruple to wring territory from the confederate whose devoted friend and patron he professed to be ; what should we have to expect, we against whom he cherishes up a national and a family hatred, if by any chance he should be enabled to strike us a sudden blow ?

The feeling therefore in England was almost entirely one of revived dread and distrust of Louis Napoleon. There was a good deal to be said for his bargain about Savoy and Nice by those who were anxious to defend it. But taken as a whole it was a singularly unfortunate transaction. It turned

back the attention of conquerors to that old-fashioned plan of partition which sanguine people were beginning to hope was gone out of European politics, like the sacking of towns and the holding of princes to ransom. It is likely that Louis Napoleon thought of this himself somewhat bitterly later on in his career, when the Germans adopted his own principle, although, as they themselves pleaded, with somewhat better excuse; for they only extorted territory from an enemy; he extorted it from a friend. There could be no pretence that it was other than an act of extortion. Even the Piedmontese statesmen who conducted the transaction—Cavour cleverly dodged out of it himself—did not venture to profess that they were doing it willingly. It had to be done. Perhaps it had to be done by Louis Napoleon as well as by Victor Emmanuel.—Cavour had compelled the Emperor of the French to make a stand for Italy; but the Emperor could hardly face his own people without telling them that France was to have something for her money and her blood. Wars for an idea generally end like this. On the whole, however, let it be owned that the Italians had made a good bargain. Savoy and Nice were provinces of which the Italian nationality was very doubtful; of which the Italian sentiment was perhaps more doubtful still. Louis Napoleon had the worst of the bargain in that as in most other transactions wherein he thought he was doing a clever thing. He went very near estranging altogether the friendly feeling of the English people from him and from France. The invasion panic sprang up again here in a moment. The volunteer forces began to increase in numbers and in ardour. Plans of coast fortification and of national defences generally were thrust upon Parliament from various quarters. A feverish anxiety about the security of the island took possession of many minds that were usually tranquil and shrewd enough. It really seemed as if the country was looking out for what Mr. Disraeli called, a short time afterwards, when he was not in office and was therefore not responsible to public clamour for the defence of our coasts, “a midnight foray from our imperial ally.” The venerable Lord Lyndhurst took on himself in especial the

task of rousing the nation. With a vigour of manner and a literary freshness of style well worthy of his earlier and best years, he devoted himself to the work of inflaming the public spirit of England against Louis Napoleon; a graceful and acrid lawyer Demosthenes denouncing a Philip of the *Opera Comique*. "If I am asked," said Lyndhurst, "whether I cannot place reliance upon the Emperor Napoleon, I reply with confidence that I cannot, because he is in a situation in which he cannot place reliance upon himself." "If the calamity should come," he asked, "if the conflagration should take place, what words can describe the extent of the calamity, or what imagination can paint the overwhelming ruin that would fall upon us?" The most harmless and even reasonable actions on the part of France were made a ground of suspicion and alarm by some agitated critics. A great London newspaper saw strong reason for uneasiness in the fact that "at this moment the French Government is pushing with extraordinary zeal the suspicious project of the impracticable Suez Canal."

We have already remarked upon the fact that up to this time there was no evidence in the public opinion of England of any sympathy with Italian independence such as became the fashion a year later. At least if there was any such sympathy here and there, it did not to any perceptible degree modify the distrust which was felt towards the Emperor Napoleon. Mrs. Barrett-Browning's passionate praises of the Emperor and lamentations for the failure of "his great deed," were regarded as the harmless and gushing sentimentalisms of a poet and a woman—indeed, a poet with many people seems a sort of woman. The King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel, had visited England not long before, and had been received with public addresses and other such demonstrations of admiration here and there; but even his concrete presence had not succeeded in making impression enough to secure him the general sympathy of the English public. Some association in Edinburgh had had the singular bad taste to send him an address of welcome in which they congratulated him on his opposition to the Holy See, as if he were another

Achilli or Gavazzi come over to denounce the Pope. The King's reply was measured out with a crushing calmness and dignity. It coldly reminded his Edinburgh admirers of the fact, which we may presume they had forgotten, that he was descended from a long line of Catholic princes, and was the sovereign of subjects almost entirely Catholic, and that he could not therefore accept with satisfaction "words of reprobation injurious to the head of the Church to which he belonged." We only recall to memory this unpleasant little incident for the purpose of pointing a moral which it might of itself suggest. It is much to be feared that the popular enthusiasm for the unity and independence of Italy, which afterwards flamed out in England, was only enthusiasm against the Pope. Something no doubt was due to the brilliancy of Garibaldi's exploits in 1860, and to the romantic halo which at that time and for long after surrounded Garibaldi himself; but no Englishman who thinks coolly over the subject will venture to deny that nine out of every ten enthusiasts for Italian liberty at that time were in favour of Italy because Italy was supposed to be in spiritual rebellion against the Pope.

The Ministry attempted great things. They undertook a complete remodelling of the Customs system, a repeal of the paper duties, and a Reform Bill. The news that a commercial treaty with France was in preparation broke on the world somewhat abruptly in the early days of 1860. The arrangement was made in a manner to set old formalism everywhere shaking its solemn head and holding up its alarmed hands. The French treaty was made without any direct assistance from professional diplomacy. It was made indeed in despite of professional diplomacy. It was the result of private conversations and an informal agreement between the Emperor of the French and Mr. Cobden. The first idea of such an arrangement came, we believe, from Mr. Bright; but it was Mr. Cobden who undertook to see the Emperor Napoleon and exchange ideas with him on the subject. The Emperor of the French, to do him justice, was entirely above the conventional formalities of imperial dignity. He sometimes ran the risk of seeming

undignified in the eyes of the vulgar by the disregard of all formality with which he was willing to allow himself to be approached. Although Mr. Cobden had never held official position of any kind in England, the Emperor received him very cordially and entered readily into his ideas on the subject of a treaty between England and France, which should remove many of the prohibitions and restrictions then interfering with a liberal interchange of the productions of the two nations. Napoleon the Third was a freetrader or something nearly approaching to it. His cousin, Prince Napoleon, was still more advanced and more decided in his views of political economy. The Emperor was, moreover, a good deal under the influence of Michael Chevalier, the distinguished French publicist and economist, who from having been a member of the Socialistic sect of the famous Père Enfantin, had come to be a practical politician and an economist of a very high order. Mr. Cobden had the assistance of all the influence Mr. Gladstone could bring to bear. It is not likely that Lord Palmerston cared much about the French treaty project, but at least he did not oppose it. Mr. Cobden was under the impression, and probably not without reason, that the officials of the English embassy in Paris were rather inclined to thwart than to assist his efforts. But if such a feeling prevailed it was perhaps less a dislike of the proposed arrangement between England and France than an objection to the informal and irregular way of bringing it about. Diplomacy has always been mechanical and conventional in its working, and the English diplomatic service has even among diplomatic services been conspicuous for its worship of routine.

There were many difficulties in the way on both sides. The French people were for the most part opposed to the principles of free trade. The French manufacturing bodies were almost all against it. Some of the most influential politicians of the country were uncompromising opponents of free trade. M. Thiers, for example, was an almost impassioned Protectionist. It may be admitted at once that if the Emperor of the French had had to submit the provisions of his treaty to the vote of an independent Legis-



lative Assembly, he could not have secured its adoption. He had in fact to enter into the engagement by virtue of his Imperial will and power. On the other hand, a strong objection was felt in this country just then to any friendly negotiation or arrangement whatever with the Emperor. His schemes in Savoy and Nice had created so much dislike and distrust of him, that many people felt as if war between the two States were more likely to come than any sincere and friendly understanding on any subject. As soon as it became known that the treaty was in course of negotiation a storm of indignation broke out in this country. Most of the newspapers denounced the treaty as a mean arrangement with a man whose policy was only perfidious, and whose vows were as little to be trusted as dicers' oaths. Not only the Conservative party condemned and denounced the proposed agreement, but a large proportion of the Liberals were bitter against it. Some critics declared that Mr. Cobden had been simply taken in; that the French Emperor had "bubbled" him. Others accused Mr. Cobden of having entered into a conspiracy with the Emperor to enable Louis Napoleon to "jockey his own subjects"—such was the phrase adopted by one influential member of Parliament, the late Mr. Horsman, then a speaker with a certain gift of rattling metallic declamation. Others again declared that the compromise effected by the treaty was in itself a breach of the principle of free trade. It was observable that this argument usually came from lately converted or still unconverted protectionists; just as the argument founded on the arbitrariness of the Imperial action was most strenuously enforced by those who at home were least inclined to encourage the principle of government by the people. Thus Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, and even Mr. Gladstone found themselves in the odd position of having to repel the charge of renouncing free trade, and rejecting the principles of representative government. It is hardly necessary to defend the course taken by Mr. Cobden in accepting a compromise where he could not possibly obtain an absolutely free interchange of commodities. The most devoted champion of the freedom of religious worship is not to be blamed if

he enters into an agreement with some foreign Government to obtain for its nonconforming subjects a qualified degree of religious liberty. An opponent of capital punishment would not be held to have surrendered his principle because he endeavoured to reduce the number of capital sentences where he saw no hope of the immediate abolition of the death penalty. Nor do we see that there was anything inconsistent in Mr. Cobden's entering into an agreement with the Emperor of the French, even though that agreement was to be carried out in France by an arbitrary exertion of Imperial will, such as would have been intolerable and impossible in England. To lay down a principle of this kind would be only to say that no statesman shall conclude an arrangement of any sort with the rulers of a State not so liberal as his own in its system of government. Of course no one ever thinks of arguing for such a principle in the regular diplomatic negotiations between States. Those who found fault with Mr. Cobden because he was willing to assent to an arrangement which the Emperor Napoleon imposed upon his subjects must have known that our official statesmen were every day entering into engagements with one or the other European sovereign which were to be carried out by that sovereign on the same arbitrary principle. There was in fact no soundness or sincerity in such objections to Mr. Cobden's work. Some men opposed it because they were protectionists, pure and simple; some opposed it because they detested the Emperor Napoleon. The ground of objection with not a few was their dislike of Mr. Cobden and the Manchester School. The hostility of some came from their repugnance to seeing anything done out of the regular and conventional way. All these objections coalesced against the treaty and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget; but the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone and the strength of the Government prevailed against them all.

The effect of the treaty, so far as France was concerned, was an engagement virtually to remove all prohibitory duties on all the staples of British manufacture, and to reduce the duties on English coal and coke, bar and pig

iron, tools, machinery, yarns, flax, and hemp. England, for her part, proposed to sweep away all duties on manufactured goods, and to reduce greatly the duties on foreign wines. In one sense, England gave more than she got, but that one sense is only the protectionist's sense—more properly nonsense. England could not, with any due regard for the real meaning of words, be said to have given up anything when she enabled her people to buy light and excellent French wines at a cheap price. She could not be said to have sacrificed anything when she secured for her consumers the opportunity of buying French manufactured articles at a natural price. The whole principle of free trade stamps as ridiculous the theory that because our neighbour foolishly cuts himself off from the easy purchase of the articles we have to sell, it is our business to cut ourselves off from the easy purchase of the articles he has to sell, and we wish to buy. We gave France much more reduction of duty than we got; but the reduction was in every instance a direct benefit to our consumers. The introduction of light wines, for example, made after a while a very remarkable, and on the whole a very beneficial, change in the habits of our people. The heavier and more fiery drinks became almost disused by large classes of the population. The light wines of Bordeaux began to be familiar to almost every table; the portentous brandied ports, which carried gout in their very breath, were gradually banished. Some of the debates on this particular part of the Budget recalled to memory the days of Colonel Sibthorp, and his dread of the importation of foreign ways among our countrymen. Many prophetic voices declared in the House of Commons that with the greater use of French wines would come the rapid adoption of what were called French morals; that the maids and matrons of England would be led by the treaty to the drinking of claret, and from the drinking of claret to the ways of the French novelist's odious heroine, Madame Bovary. Appalling pictures were drawn of the orgies to go on in the shops of confectioners and pastrycooks who had a licence to sell the light wines. The virtue of Englishwomen, it was insisted, would never be able to stand this

new and terrible mechanism of destruction. She who was far above the temptations of the public-house would be drawn easily into the more genteel allurements of the wine-selling confectioner's shop; and in every such shop would be the depraved conventional foreigner, the wretch with a moustache and without morals, lying in wait to accomplish at last his long-boasted conquests of the blonde misses of England. One impassioned speaker, glowing into a genuine prophetic fury as he spoke, warned his hearers of the near approach of a time when a man suddenly entering one of the accursed confectioners' shops, in quest of the missing female members of his family, would find his wife lying drunk in one room and his daughter disgraced in another.

In spite of all this, Mr. Gladstone succeeded in carrying this part of his Budget. He carried, too, as far as the House of Commons was concerned, his important measure for the abolition of the duty on paper. The duty on paper was the last remnant of an ancient system of finance which pressed severely on journalism. The stamp duty was originally imposed with the object of checking the growth of seditious newspapers. It was reduced, increased, reduced again, and increased again, until in the early part of the century it stood at fourpence on each copy of a newspaper issued. In 1836 it was brought down to the penny, represented by the red stamp on every paper, which most of us can still remember. There was besides this a considerable duty—sixpence, or some such sum—on every advertisement in a newspaper. Finally, there was the heavy duty on the paper material itself. A journal, therefore, could not come into existence until it had made provision for all these factitious and unnecessary expenses. The consequence was that a newspaper was a costly thing. Its possession was the luxury of the rich; those who could afford less had to be content with an occasional read of a paper. It was common for a number of persons to club together and take in a paper, which they read by turns, the general understanding being that he whose turn came last remained in possession of the journal. It was considered the fair compensation for his late reception of the news that he should come into the full proprietorship of the precious newspaper.

The price of a daily paper then was uniformly sixpence ; and no sixpenny paper contained anything like the news, or went to a tenth of the daily expense, which is supplied in the one case and undertaken in the other by the penny papers of our day. Gradually the burthens on journalism and on the reading public were reduced. The advertisement duty was abolished ; in 1855 the stamp duty was abolished ; that is to say, the stamp was either removed altogether, or was allowed to stand as postage. On the strength of this reform many new and cheap journals were started. Two of them in London, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Star*, acquired influence and reputation. But the effect of the duty on the paper-material still told heavily against cheap journalism. It became painfully evident that a newspaper could not be sold profitably for a penny while that duty remained, and therefore a powerful agitation was set on foot for its removal. The agitation was carried on, not on behalf of the interests of newspaper speculation, but on behalf of the reading public, and of the education of the people. It is not necessary now to enter upon any argument to show that the publication of such a paper as the *Daily News* or the *Daily Telegraph* must be a matter of immense importance in popular education. But at that time there were still men who argued that newspaper literature could only be kept up to a proper level of instruction and decorum by being made factitiously costly. It was the creed of many that cheap newspapers meant the establishment of a daily propaganda of socialism, communism, red republicanism, blasphemy, bad spelling, and general immorality.

Mr. Gladstone undertook the congenial task of abolishing the duty on paper. He was met with strong opposition from both sides of the House. The paper manufacturers made it at once a question of protection to their own trade. They dreaded the competition of all manner of adventurous rivals under a free system. Many of the paper manufacturers had been staunch free traders when it was a case of free trade to be applied to the manufactures of other people ; but they cried out against having the ingredients of the unwelcome chalice commended to their own lips. Vested

interests in the newspaper business itself also opposed Mr. Gladstone. The high-priced and well-established journals did not by any means relish the idea of cheap and unfettered competition. They therefore preached without reserve the doctrine that in journalism cheap meant nasty, and that the only way to keep the English press pure and wholesome was to continue the monopoly to their own publications. The House of Commons is a good deal governed, directly and indirectly, by "interests." It is influenced by them directly, as when the railway interest, the mining interest, the brewing interest, or the landed interest, boldly stands up through its acknowledged representatives in Parliament, to fight for its own hand. It is also much influenced indirectly. Every powerful interest in the House can contrive to enlist the sympathies and get the support of men who have no direct concern one way or another in some proposed measure, who know nothing about it, and do not want to be troubled with any knowledge, and who are therefore easily led to see that the side on which some of their friends are arrayed must be the right side. There was a good deal of rallying up of such men to sustain the cause of the paper-making and journal-selling monopoly. The result was that although Mr. Gladstone carried his resolutions for the abolition of the excise on paper, he only carried them by dwindling majorities. The second reading was carried by a majority of 53; the third by a majority of only 9. The effect of this was to encourage some members of the House of Lords to attempt the task of getting rid of Mr. Gladstone's proposed reform altogether. An amendment to reject the resolutions repealing the tax was proposed by Lord Monteagle, and received the support of Lord Derby and of Lord Lyndhurst.

Lord Lyndhurst was then just entering on his eighty-ninth year. His growing infirmities made it necessary that a temporary railing should be constructed in front of his seat in order that he might lean on it and be supported. But although his physical strength thus needed support his speech gave no evidence of failing intellect. Even his voice could hardly be said to have lost any of its clear, light, musical strength. He entered into a long and a very telling

argument to show that although the peers had abandoned their claim to alter a money bill, they had still a right to refuse their assent to a repeal of taxation, and that in this particular instance they were justified in doing so. There was not much perhaps in this latter part of the argument. Lord Lyndhurst fell back on some of his familiar alarms about the condition of Europe and the possible schemes of Louis Napoleon, and out of these he extracted reasons for contending that we ought to maintain unimpaired the revenue of the country, to be ready to meet emergencies, and encounter unexpected liabilities. In an ordinary time not much attention would be paid to criticism of this kind. It would be regarded as the duty of the Finance Minister, the Government and the House of Commons, to see that the wants of the coming year were properly provided for in taxation; and when the Government and the House of Commons had once decided that a certain amount was sufficient, the House of Lords would hardly think that on it lay any responsibility for a formal revision of the ministerial scheme. Some peer would in all probability make some such observations as those of Lord Lyndhurst; but they would be accepted as mere passing criticisms of the ministerial scheme, and it would not occur to any one to think of taking a division on the suggested amendment. In this instance the House of Lords was undoubtedly influenced by a dislike for the proposed measure of reduction, for the manner in which it had been introduced, for its ministerial author, or at least for his general policy, and for some of the measures by which it had been accompanied. It is not unlikely, for example, that Lord Lyndhurst himself felt something like resentment for the policy which answered all his eloquent warnings about the schemes of the Emperor Napoleon, by producing a treaty of commerce with the supposed invader of England. The repeal of the paper duty was known also to have the warm advocacy of Mr. Bright; and it was advocated by the *Morning Star*, a journal greatly influenced by Mr. Bright's opinions, and in which popular rumour said, very untruly, that Mr. Bright was a writer of frequent leading-articles. Thus the repeal of the paper duty got to seem in the eyes

of many peers a proposal connected somehow with the spread of Democracy, the support of the Manchester School, and the designs of Napoleon III.

The question which the House of Lords had to face was somewhat serious. The Commons had repealed a tax; was it constitutionally in the power of the House of Lords to reimpose it? Was not this, it was asked, simply to assert for the House of Lords a taxing power equal to that of the Commons? Was it not to reduce to nothing the principle that taxation and representation go together? Suppose instead of re-enacting the paper duty the House of Lords had thought fit to introduce into the new Budget a new and different tax, what was there to hinder them, on their own principle, from doing so? On the other hand, those who took Lord Lyndhurst's view of the question insisted that when the Budget scheme was laid before them for their approval, the House of Lords had as good a right constitutionally to reject as to accept any part of it, and that to strike out a clause in a Budget was quite a different thing from taking the initiative in the imposition of taxation. It was contended that the House of Lords had not only a constitutional right to act as they were invited to do in the case of the paper duty, but that as a matter of fact they had often done so, and that the country had never challenged their authority. The Conservative party in the House of Lords can always carry any division, and in this instance it was well known that they could marshal a strong majority against Mr. Gladstone's proposed remission of taxation. But it was commonly expected that they would on this occasion, as they had done on many others, abstain from using their overpowering numerical strength; that prudent counsels would prevail in the end, and that the amendment would not be pressed to a division. The hope, however, was deceived. The House of Lords was in an unusually aggressive mood. The majority were resolved to show that they could do something. Mr. Disraeli in one of his novels had irreverently said of the Lords, that when the peers accomplish a division they cackle as if they had laid an egg. On this occasion they were determined to have a division. The majority against the Government was overwhelming. For



the second reading of the Paper Duty Bill, 90 peers voted and there were 14 proxies; in all 104. For Lord Monteaule's amendment there were 161 votes of peers actually present and 32 proxies, or 193 in all. The majority against the Government was therefore 89; and the repeal of the excise duty on paper was done with for that session. The peers went home cackling; not a few of them, however, a little in doubt as to the wisdom of the course they had pursued, a little afraid to think on what they had done. The House of Lords had not taken any very active step in politics for some time, and many of them were uncertain as to the manner in which the country would regard their unwonted exertion of authority.

The country took it rather coolly on the whole. Lord Palmerston promptly came forward and moved in the House of Commons for a committee to ascertain and report on the practice of each House with regard to the several descriptions of Bills imposing or repealing taxes. By thus interposing at once he hoped to take the wind out of the sails of a popular agitation which he disliked and would gladly have avoided. The committee took two months to consider their report. They passed by a majority of fourteen a series of resolutions to the effect that the privilege of the House of Commons did not extend so far as to make it actually unconstitutional for the Lords to reject a Bill for the repeal of a tax. Mr. Walpole was the chairman of the committee, and he drew up the report, which cited a considerable number of precedents in support of the view adopted by the majority. Mr. Bright, who was a member of the committee, did not assent to this principle. He prepared a draft report of his own in which he contended for the very reasonable view, that if the Lords might prolong or reimpose a tax by refusing their assent to its repeal when that repeal had been voted by the House of Commons, the House of Commons could not have absolute control over the taxation of the country. „It seems clear that, whatever may have been the technical right of the Lords, or however precedent may have occasionally appeared to justify the course which they took, Mr. Bright was warranted in asserting that the Constitution never gave the House of

Lords any power of reimposing a tax which the Commons had repealed. The truth is, that if the majority of the House of Commons in favour of the repeal of the paper duties had been anything considerable, the House of Lords would never have ventured to interfere. There was an impression among many peers that the remission was not much liked even by the majority of those who voted for it. "Gladstone has done it all," was the common saying; and it was insisted that Gladstone had done it only to satisfy Mr. Bright and the Manchester Radicals. Not a few of the peers felt convinced that the majority of the House of Commons would secretly bless them for their intervention.

Lord Palmerston followed up the report of the committee by proposing a series of resolutions which he probably considered equal to the occasion. The object of the resolutions was to reaffirm the position and the claims of the House of Commons in regard to questions of taxation. That at least was the ostensible object; the real object was to do something which should leave a way of retreat open to the Lords in another session, and at the same time make those who clamoured against their intervention believe that the Ministry were not indifferent to the rights of the representative chamber. The first resolution affirmed that "the right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their constitution; and the limitation of all such grants as to the matter, manner, measure, and time, is only in them." The second resolution declared that although the Lords had rejected Bills relating to taxation by negating the whole, yet the exercise of such a power had not been frequent, and was justly regarded by the House of Commons with peculiar jealousy as affecting the right of the Commons to grant the supplies. The third resolution merely laid it down that "to guard for the future against an undue exercise of that power by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply," the House reaffirmed its right to impose and remit taxes, and to frame Bills of Supply.

Such resolutions were not likely to satisfy the more impatient among the Liberals. An appeal was made to

the people generally to thunder a national protest against the House of Lords. But the country did not, it must be owned, respond very tumultuously to the invitation. Great public meetings were held in London and the large towns of the North, and much anger was expressed at the conduct of the Lords. The *Morning Star* newspaper led the agitation. It had recourse to the ingenious device of announcing every day in large letters and in a conspicuous part of its columns that the House of Lords had that day imposed so many thousand pounds of taxation on the English people contrary to the fundamental principles of the Constitution. It divided the whole amount of the reimposed duty by the number of days in the year, and thus arrived at the exact sum which it declared to have been each day unconstitutionally imposed on the country. This device was copied by the promoters of public meetings; and M. Taine, the French author, then in this country, was amused to see placards borne about in the streets with this portentous announcement. Mr. Bright threw his eloquence and his influence into the agitation, and Mr. Gladstone expressed himself strongly in favour of its object. Yet the country did not become greatly excited over the controversy. It did not even enter warmly into the question as to the necessity of abolishing the House of Lords. One indignant writer insisted that if the Lords did not give way the English people would turn them out of Westminster Palace, and strew the Thames with the wrecks of their painted chamber. Language such as this sounded oddly out of tune with the temper of the time. The general conviction of the country was undoubtedly that the Lords were in the wrong; that whatever their technical right, if they had any, they had made a mistake, and that it would certainly be necessary to check them if they attempted to repeat it. But the feeling also was that there was not the slightest chance of such a mistake being repeated. The mere fact that so much stir had been made about it was enough to secure the country against any chance of its passing into a precedent. In truth the country could not be induced to feel any fear of persistent unconstitutional action on

the part of the House of Lords. That House is known by every one to hold most of its technical rights on condition of its rarely exercising them. When once its action in any particular case has been seriously called in question, it is certain that that action will not be repeated. Its principal function in the State now is to interpose at some moment of emergency and give the House of Commons time to think over some action which seems inconsiderate. This is a very important and may be a very useful office. At first sight it may appear a little paradoxical to compare the functions of the English House of Lords in any way with those of the chief magistrate of the United States; and yet the delaying power which the President possesses is almost exactly the same as that which our usages even more than our Constitution have put at the discretion of the House of Lords. The President can veto a Bill in the first instance. But the Legislature can afterwards, if they will, pass the measure in spite of him by a certain majority.\* Practically this means that the President can say to the Legislature, "I think this measure has not been very carefully considered; I send it back, and invite you to think the matter over again. If when you have done so you still desire to pass the measure, I can make no further objection." This is all that the House of Lords can now do, and only in exceptional cases will the peers venture to do so much. Most people knew in 1860 that the interposition of the House of Lords only meant the delay of a session; and knew too that the controversy which had been raised upon the subject, such as it was, would be quite enough to keep the peers from carrying the thing too far. A course of action which Mr. Gladstone denounced as a "gigantic innovation," which Lord Palmerston could not approve, which the Liberal party generally condemned, and which the House of Commons made the occasion of a significantly warning resolution, was not in the least likely to be converted by repetition into an established principle and precedent. This was the reason why the country took the whole matter with comparative indifference. It was not in the least influenced by the servile

arguments which many Conservatives and a few feeble Liberals employed to make out a constitutional case for the House of Lords. One orator, Mr. Horsman, carried his objection to democracy so far as to undertake an elaborate argument to prove that the House of Lords had a taxing power co-ordinate with that of the House of Commons. It may be imagined to what a depth party feeling had brought some men down when it is stated that this nonsense was applauded by the Conservatives in the House of Commons. Luckily for the privileges of the House of Lords no serious attention was paid to Mr. Horsman's argument. If that indiscreet champion of the authority of the Lords could have made out his case, if he could have shown that the peers really had a taxing power co-ordinate with that of the Commons, there would have been nothing for it but to make new arrangements and withdraw from the hereditary assembly so inappropriate a privilege. For it may be surely taken for granted that the people of this country would never endure the idea of being taxed by a legislative body over whose members they had no manner of control.

The whole controversy has little political importance now. Perhaps it is most interesting for the evidence it gave that Mr. Gladstone was every day drifting more and more away from the opinions, not merely of his old Conservative associates, but even of his later Whig colleagues. The position which he took up in this dispute was entirely different from that of Lord Palmerston. He condemned without reserve or mitigation the conduct of the Lords, and he condemned it on the very grounds which made his words most welcome to the Radicals. He did not indeed give his support to the course of extreme self-assertion which some Radical members recommended to the House of Commons; but he made it clear that he only disclaimed such measures because he felt convinced the House of Lords would soon come to its senses again, and would refrain from similar acts of unconstitutional interference in the future. The first decided adhesion of Mr. Gladstone to the doctrines of the more advanced Liberals is generally regarded as having taken place at a somewhat

later period, and in relation to a different question. It would seem, however, that the first decisive intimation of the path Mr. Gladstone was thenceforward to tread was his declaration that the constitutional privileges of the representative assembly would not be safe in the hands of the Conservative Opposition. Mr. Gladstone was distinctly regarded during that debate as the advocate of a policy far more energetic than any professed by Lord Palmerston. The promoters of the meetings, which had been held to protest against the interference of the Lords, found full warrant for the course they had taken in Mr. Gladstone's stern protest against the "gigantic innovation." Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, certainly suffered some damage in the eyes of the extreme Liberals. It became more clear than ever to them that he had no sympathy with any Radical movement here at home, however he might sympathise with every Radical movement on the Continent. Still Lord Palmerston's resolutions contained in them quite enough to prove to the Lords that they had gone a little too far, and that they must not attempt anything of the kind again. A story used to be told of Lord Palmerston at that time which would not have been out of character had it been true. Some one, it was said, pressed him to say what he intended to do about the Lords and the reimposition of the paper duties. "I mean to tell them," was the alleged reply of Lord Palmerston, "that it was a very good joke for once, but they must not give it to us again." This was really the effect of Palmerston's resolutions. All very well for once; but don't try it again. The Lords took the hint. They did not try it again. Even in that year, 1860, Mr. Gladstone was able to carry his resolution for removing, in accordance with the provisions of the French Treaty, so much of the Customs duty on imported paper as exceeded the Excise duty on paper made here at home.

Meanwhile the Government had sustained a severe humiliation in another way. They had had to abandon their Reform Bill. The Bill was a moderate and simple scheme of reform. It proposed to lower the county franchise to £10, and that of the boroughs to £6; and to

make a considerable redistribution of seats. Twenty-five boroughs returning two members each were to return but one for the future, and the representation of several large counties and divisions of counties was to be strengthened; Kensington and Chelsea were to form a borough with two members; Birkenhead, Stalybridge, and Burnley were to have one member each; Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Birmingham were each to have an additional member; the University of London was to have a member. It was also proposed that where there were three members to a constituency the third should represent the minority—an end to be accomplished by the simple process of allowing each elector to vote for only two of the three. The Bill was brought in on March 1. The second reading was moved on March 19. Mr. Disraeli condemned the measure then, although he did not propose to offer any opposition to it at that stage. He made a long and laboured speech, in which he talked of the Bill as “a measure of mediæval character, without the inspiration of the feudal system or the genius of the Middle Ages.” No one knew exactly what this meant; but it was loudly applauded by Mr. Disraeli’s followers, and was thought rather fine by some of those who sat on the ministerial side. Mr. Disraeli also condemned it for being too homogeneous in its character; by which he was understood to mean that he considered there was too great a monotony or uniformity in the suffrage it proposed to introduce. Long nights of debate more or less languid followed. Mr. Disraeli, with his usual sagacity, was merely waiting to see how things would go before he committed himself or his party to any decided opposition. He began very soon to see that there was no occasion for him to take any great trouble in the matter. He and his friends had little more to do than to look on and smile complacently while the chances of the Bill were being hopelessly undermined by some of the followers of the Government. The milder Whigs hated the scheme rather more than the Tories did. ‘It was Lord John Russell’s scheme. Russell was faithful to the cause of reform, and he was backed up by the support of Cobden, Bright, and the Manchester and Radical party in general.

But the Bill found little favour in the Cabinet itself. It was accepted principally as a means of soothing the Radicals, and appeasing Lord John Russell. Lord Palmerston was well known to be personally indifferent to its fate. There was good reason to believe that, if left to himself, he would never have introduced such a measure, or any measure having the same object. Lord Palmerston was not so foreseeing as Mr. Disraeli. The leader of the Opposition knew well enough even then that a Reform Bill of some kind would have to be brought in before long. There is not the least reason to suppose that he ever for a moment fell into Lord Palmerston's mistake, and fancied that the opinions of the clubs, of the respectable Whigs, and of the metropolitan shopkeepers, represented the opinions of the English people. Mr. Disraeli probably foresaw even then that it might be convenient to his own party one day to seek for the credit of carrying a Radical Reform Bill. He therefore took care not to express any disapproval of the principles of reform in the debates that took place on the second reading of Lord John Russell's Bill. His manner was that of one who looks on scornfully at a bungling attempt to do some piece of work which he could do much better if he had a chance of making the attempt. "Call that a Reform Bill," he seemed to say, "that piece of homogeneity and mediævalism, which has neither the genius of feudalism nor the spirit of the Middle Ages! Only give me a chance some day of trying my hand again, and then you shall see the genius of the Middle Ages, and the later ages, and feudalism, and all the rest of it, combined to perfection."

Meanwhile the Bill was drifting and floundering on to destruction. If Lord Palmerston had spoken one determined word in its favour, it could have been easily carried. The Conservatives would not have taken on themselves the responsibility of a prolonged resistance. Those of the Liberals who secretly detested the measure would not have had the courage to stand up against Lord Palmerston. Their real objection to the proposed reform was that it would put them to the trouble of a new



election, and that they did not like the extreme Radicals and the Manchester School. But they would have swallowed their objections if they had supposed that Lord Palmerston was determined to pass the Bill. Very soon they came to understand, or at least to believe, that Lord Palmerston would be rather pleased than otherwise to see the measure brought into contempt. Lord Palmerston took practically no part in the debates. He did actually make a speech at a late period ; but, as Mr. Disraeli said with admirable effect, it was a speech not so much "in support of, as about, the Reform Bill." Sir George Lewis argued for the Bill so coldly and sadly that Sir E. B. Lytton brought down the laughter and cheers of both sides of the House when he described Lewis as having "come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him." The measure was already doomed : it was virtually dead and buried. Notice was given of amendment after amendment, chiefly or altogether by professing Liberals. The practice of obstructing the progress of the Bill by incessant speech-making was introduced and made to work with ominous effect. Some of the more boisterous of the Tories began to treat the whole thing as a good piece of fun. Once an attempt was made to get the House counted out during the progress of the debate. It would be a capital means of reducing the whole discussion to an absurdity, some members thought, if the House could actually be counted out during a debate on the Reform Bill. A Bill to remould the whole political constitution of the country—and the House of Commons not caring enough about the subject to contribute forty listeners, or even forty patient watchers, within the precincts of Westminster Palace ! When the attempt to count did not succeed in the ordinary way, it occurred to the genius of some of the Conservatives that the object might be accomplished by a little gentle and not unacceptable violence. A number of stout squires therefore got round the door in the lobby, and endeavoured by sheer physical obstruction to prevent zealous members from re-entering the House. It will be easily understood what the temper of the majority was when horse-play of this kind could even

be attempted. At length it was evident that the Bill could not pass; that the talk which was in preparation must smother it. The moment the Bill got into committee there would be amendments on every line of it, and every member could speak as often as he pleased. The session was passing; the financial measures could not be postponed or put aside; the opponents of the Reform Bill, open and secret, had the Government at their mercy. On Monday, June 11, Lord John Russell announced that the Government had made up their minds to withdraw the Bill. There was no alternative. Lord Palmerston had rendered to the Bill exactly that sort of service which Kemble rendered to the play of "Vortigern and Rowena." Kemble laid a peculiar emphasis on the words, "And when this solemn mockery is o'er," and glanced at the pit in such a manner as to express only too clearly the contempt he had for the part which he was coerced to play; and the pit turned the piece into ridicule, and would have no more of it. If Kemble had approved of the play, they might have put up with it for his sake; but when he gave them leave, they simply made sport of it. Lord Palmerston conveyed to his pit his private idea on the subject of the Reform Bill which he had officially to recommend; and the pit took the hint, and there was an end of the Bill.

Lord Palmerston became more unpopular than ever with the advanced Liberals. He had yielded so far to public alarm as to propose a vote of two millions, the first instalment of a sum of nine millions, to be laid out in fortifying our coast against the Emperor of the French. He was accused of gross inconsistency. The statesman who went out of his way to give premature recognition to Louis Napoleon after the *coup d'état*; the statesman of the Conspiracy Bill, was now clamouring for the means to resist a treacherous invasion from his favourite ally. Yet Lord Palmerston was not inconsistent. He had now brought himself seriously to believe that Louis Napoleon meditated evil to England; and with Palmerston, right or wrong, England was the one supreme consideration. To us he seems to have been wrong when he patronised Louis Napoleon, and wrong when he wasted money in measures

remove the obstructions in the river, and clear a passage for the Envoys. They do not appear to have actually refused the request, but they said that they had sent a messenger to Tien-tsin to announce the approach of the fleet. When, however, the Envoys reached the mouth of the river they found the defences further increased. Some negotiations and intercommunications took place, and a Chinese official from Tien-tsin came to Mr. Bruce and endeavoured to obtain some delay or compromise. Mr. Bruce became convinced that the condition of things predicted by Lord Malmesbury was coming about, and that the Chinese authorities were only trying to defeat his purpose. He also imagined, or discovered, that there was a want of proper respect for an English Envoy shown in the terms of the letter and the rank of the official by whom it was conveyed. After a consultation with the French Envoy, Mr. Bruce called on Admiral Hope to clear a passage for the vessels. On June 25 the Admiral brought his gunboats close to the barriers, and began to attempt their removal. The forts opened fire. The Chinese artillerymen showed unexpected skill and precision. Four of the gunboats were almost immediately disabled. All the attacking vessels got aground. Admiral Hope attempted to storm the forts. The attempt was a complete failure. About 1000 Englishmen and 100 French went into action, of whom nearly 450 were killed or wounded. Admiral Hope himself was wounded; so was the commander of the French vessel which had contributed a contingent to the storming party. An American naval captain rendered great service to the English and French in their distress. With "magnanimous indiscretion" he disregarded the strict principles of international law; declared that "blood was thicker than water," and that he could not look on and see Englishmen destroyed by Chinese without trying to lend them a helping hand. The attempt to force a passage of the river was given up, and the mission to Peking was over for the present.

It will be easily imagined that the news created a deep sensation in England. It soon became known that although the Chinese Government did not exactly accept the responsi-

bility of what had occurred on the Peiho, yet they bluntly and rudely refused to make any apology for the attack on our ships or to punish the officials who had ordered it. People in general made up their minds at once that the matter could not be allowed to rest there, and that the mission to Peking must be enforced. At the same time a strong feeling prevailed that the Envoy, Mr. Bruce, had been imprudent and precipitate in his conduct. Lord Elgin had himself stated that we could have no right to navigate the Peiho until after the ratification of the treaty; and however discourteous or even double-dealing the conduct of the Chinese authorities might have been, it was surely a questionable policy to insist on forcing our way to the capital by one particular route to which for any reason they objected. For this, however, it seems more just to blame Lord Malmesbury than Mr. Bruce. Lord Malmesbury had of course no idea of what was likely to happen; but his instructions to the English Envoy read as if they were prepared with a view to that very contingency. Mr. Bruce might well have thought that they left him no alternative but to force his way. Before the whole question came to be discussed in Parliament the Conservatives had gone out and the Liberals had come in. Lord Palmerston's Government were only responsible in a technical sort of way for what had happened; and to do them justice they only defended the proceeding in a very cold and perfunctory manner. But they could hardly condemn their predecessors, whose action they had to continue and whose responsibilities they had to assume, and there did not seem much use in attacking the conduct of men who were out of office and were no longer amenable to parliamentary censure. It seems only fair to say that the outcry raised in England about the treacherous conduct of the Chinese at the mouth of the Peiho was unfounded and even absurd. The Chinese Government showed itself as usual crafty, double-dealing, and childishy arrogant for a while; but the Chinese at the Peiho cannot be accused of perfidy. They had mounted the forts and barricaded the river openly and even ostentatiously. The English Admiral knew for days and days that the forts were

armed, and that the passage of the river was obstructed. A man who when he sees you approaching his hall-door closes and bars it against you, and holds a rifle pointed at your head while he parleys with you from an upper window, may be a very inhospitable and discourteous person; but if when you attempt to dash in his door he fires at you with his rifle, you can hardly call him treacherous, or say that you had no expectation of what was going to happen. Some of the English officers who were actually engaged in the attempt of Admiral Hope frankly repudiated the idea of any treachery on the part of the Chinese, or any surprise on their own side. They knew perfectly well, they said, that the forts were about to resist the attempt to force a way for the Envoys up the river.

The English and French Governments determined that the men who had made the treaty of Tien-tsin—Lord Elgin and Baron Gros—should be sent back to insist on its reinforcement. Sir Hope Grant was appointed to the military command of our land forces, and General Cousin de Montauban, afterwards Count Palikao, commanded the soldiers of France. We need not here enter into the military history of the expedition. The English and French made short work of the Chinese resistance. The Chinese, to do them justice, fought very bravely, as indeed they seem to have done on all occasions when war was forced on them; but of course they had no chance whatever against such forces as those commanded by the English and French generals. The allies captured the Taku forts, occupied Tien-tsin, and marched on Peking. The Chinese Government endeavoured to negotiate for peace, and to interpose any manner of delay, diplomatic or otherwise, between the allies and their progress to the capital. Lord Elgin consented at last to enter into negotiations at Tungchow, a walled town ten or twelve miles nearer than Peking. The Chinese commissioners were to meet the European plenipotentiaries at Tungchow. Lord Elgin's secretaries, Mr. Parkes and Mr. Loch, accompanied by some English officers, by Mr. Bowlby, the correspondent of the *Times*, and by some members of the staff of Baron Gros, went to Tungchow to make the necessary arrange-

ments for an interview between the envoys and the Chinese commissioners. On their way back they had to pass through the lines of a large Chinese force, which had occupied the ground marked out by the commissioners themselves for the use of the European allies. Some quarrel took place between a French commissariat officer and some Tartar soldiers, and a sort of general engagement was brought on. Mr. Parkes and Mr. Loch and several of their companions, French and English, were seized and dragged off to various prisons, despite the fact that they bore a flag of truce, and were known to have come for the purpose of arranging a conference requested by the Chinese themselves with a view to peace. Twenty-six British subjects and twelve subjects of France were thus carried off. Mr. Parkes and Mr. Loch were afterwards released, after having been treated with much cruelty and indignity. Of the twenty-six British subjects thus seized, thirteen died of the horrible ill-treatment they received. The thirteen who were released all bore more or less evidence physically of the usage which had been inflicted on them. Lord Elgin refused to negotiate until the prisoners had been returned, and the allied armies were actually at one of the great gates of Peking, and had their guns in position to blow the gate in, when the Chinese acceded to their terms. The gate was surrendered, the allies entered the city, and the English and French flags were hoisted side by side on the walls of Peking. It was only after entering the city that Lord Elgin learned of the murder of the captives. He then determined to inflict an exemplary and a signal punishment on the Chinese authorities. The Chinese Summer Palace, a building, or rather a park and collection of buildings of immense extent, had been plundered somewhat efficiently by the French on their march to Peking. The French Commander-in-Chief had become possessed of a magnificent diamond necklace, which, according to popular rumour, was afterwards an adornment of the festivities of the Imperial Tuileries. Lord Elgin now determined that the palace should be burnt down as a means of impressing the mind of the Chinese authorities generally with some sense of the danger of treachery and foul play.

"What remains of the palace," such was Lord Elgin's stern notification, "which appears to be the place at which several of the British captives were subjected to the grossest indignities, will be immediately levelled to the ground; this condition requires no assent on the part of his Highness" (Prince Kung, the Chinese emperor's brother and plenipotentiary), "because it will be at once carried into effect by the Commander-in-Chief." Two days were occupied in the destruction of the palace. It covered an area of many miles. The palace of Adrian, at Tivoli, might have been hidden in one of its courts. Gardens, temples, small lodges and pagodas, groves, grottos, lakes, bridges, terraces, artificial hills, diversified the vast space. All the artistic treasures, all the curiosities, archæological and other, that Chinese wealth and Chinese taste, such as it was, could bring together, had been accumulated in this magnificent pleasaunce. The surrounding scenery was beautiful. The high mountains of Tartary ramparted one side of the enclosure. "It certainly was," says a spectator, "one of the most curious, and also one of the most beautiful, scenes I had ever beheld." The buildings were set on fire; the whole place was given over to destruction. A monument was raised with an inscription in Chinese, setting forth that such was the reward of perfidy and cruelty.

Very different opinions were held in England as to the destruction of the Imperial palace. To many it seemed an act of unintelligible and unpardonable vandalism. Assuredly the responsibility which Lord Elgin assumed was great. It was all the greater because the French plenipotentiary refused to share it. This was not, however, because the French Envoy thought it an act of mere vandalism. The French, who had remorselessly looted the palace, who had made it a wreck before Lord Elgin converted its site into a desert, could hardly have offered any becoming protest in the interests of art and of conciliation. The French plenipotentiary was merely of opinion that the destruction of the palace might interfere with the negotiations for peace which he was naturally anxious to bring to a conclusion. Lord

Elgin assumed a heavy responsibility in another way, inasmuch as he did not consider the capture of the Englishmen to have been a deliberate act of treachery on the part of the Chinese authorities. "On the whole," he wrote, "I come to the conclusion that in the proceedings of the Chinese plenipotentiaries and commander-in-chief in this instance there was that mixture of stupidity, want of straightforwardness, suspicion, and bluster which characterises so generally the conduct of affairs in this country; but I cannot believe that, after the experience which Sang-ko-lin-sin" (the Chinese general-in-chief) "had already had of our superiority in the field, either he or his civil colleagues could have intended to bring on a conflict in which, as the event has proved, he was sure to be worsted." Still, Lord Elgin held that for the ill-treatment and murder of men who ought never to have been touched with unfriendly hand, the Chinese authorities must be held responsible; and that even war itself must become ten times more horrible if it were not one of its essential conditions that the messengers engaged in the preliminaries of peace are to be held sacred from harm.

In this Lord Elgin was undoubtedly right. The only question was as to his justification in adopting what seemed to be so illogical and barbarous a mode of taking vengeance. Would any breach of faith committed by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, when there was such a prince, have justified a foreign conqueror in destroying the Pitti Palace? Would any act of treachery committed by a Spanish sovereign justify the destruction of the Alhambra? To such demands Lord Elgin would have answered that he had no other way of recording in memorable characters his condemnation of the cruelty perpetrated by the Chinese. He explained, that if he did not demand the surrender of the actual perpetrators, it was because he knew full well that no difficulty would have been made about giving him a seeming satisfaction. The Chinese Government would have handed over to him as many victims as he chose to ask for, or would have executed as many as he thought fit to suggest. They would have selected for vicarious punishment, in all probability, a crowd of mean and unfortunate wretches who had no



more to do with the murders than Lord Elgin had himself, who perhaps had never heard that such murders were done, and who would possibly even go to their death without the slightest notion of the reason why they were chosen out for such a doom. That was the chief reason which determined Lord Elgin. We confess it seems to us to have some strength in it. Most of our actions in the war were unjustifiable; this was the one for which, perhaps, the best case could be made out by a moralist. It is somewhat singular that so many persons should have been roused to indignation by the destruction of a building who took with perfect composure the unjust invasion of a country.

The allied powers now of course had it all their own way. A convention was made by which China agreed that the representatives of England and France should reside either permanently or occasionally in Peking, according as the English and French Governments might decide, and that the port of Tien-tsin should be open to trade and to the residence of foreign subjects. China had to pay a war indemnity, and a large sum of money as compensation to the families of the murdered prisoners and to those who had suffered injuries, and to make an apology for the attack by the garrison of the Taku forts. Thus England established her right to have an envoy in Peking, whether the Chinese liked it or not. The practical result was not very great. Perhaps the most important gain to Europe was the knowledge that Peking was not by any means so large a city as we had all imagined it to be. British geographies had time out of mind taught British children that Peking was the largest city in the world. Now we learned that it was not nearly so large as several other cities, and that it was on the whole rather a crumbling and tumble-down sort of place. There is some comfort in knowing that so much blood was not spilt wholly in vain.

The same year saw also the troubles in the mountain terraces of the Lebanon, which likewise led to the combined intervention of England and France. The disturbances arose out of the rivalries and quarrels between two sects, the Maronites and those whom Mr. Browning's poem describes as "the Druse nation, warders on the mount of

the world's secret since the birth of time." In the month of May a Maronite monk was found murdered, and suspicion fell upon the Druses. Some Druses were killed apparently in retaliation. Then there were some killings on each side. On May 28 a general attack was made by the Druses on the Maronite villages in the neighbourhood of Beyrout, and some of them were burnt down. A large town under Mount Hermon was attacked by the Druses. The Turkish commander ordered the Maronites to lay down their arms, and promised that he would protect them. They did give up their arms, and the Turkish officer had the weapons removed. Then he seems to have abandoned the Maronites to their enemies. The Druses, animated by such a spirit as might have belonged to their worshipped chief and saint, Hakem, poured into the place and massacred them all. The Turkish soldiers did not make any attempt to protect them, but even, it was stated, in some cases helped the Druses in their work of butchery. In July the fanatical spirit spread to Damascus. A mob of Turkish fanatics made a general attack upon the Christian quarter, and burned the greater part of it down. The consulates of France, Russia, Austria, Holland, Belgium, and Greece were destroyed. Nearly two thousand Christians were massacred in that one day's work. Many of the respectable Mussulman inhabitants of Damascus were most generous and brave in their attempts to save and shelter the unfortunate Christians; but the Turkish Governor of Damascus, although he had a strong military force at his disposal, made no serious effort to interfere with the work of massacre; and, as might be expected, his supineness was construed by the mob as an official approval of their doings, and they murdered with all the more vigour and zest. The famous Algerian chief, Abd-el-Kader, was then living in Damascus, and he exerted himself nobly in the defence and protection of the Christians. France had treated him when fallen and a prisoner with something like generosity, and he well repaid in this season of horror to the Christians in Damascus any debt that he may have owed to a Christian people.

The news of the massacres in the Lebanon naturally

created a profound sensation in England. The cause of the disturbance was not very clearly understood in the first instance, and it was generally assumed it was a mere quarrel of religion between Christians and Mahomedans. The Maronites being Christians, "a sect of Syrian Christians, united to Rome, although preserving their own primitive discipline," the Druses were assumed to be Mussulmans. Mr. Urquhart gave an amusing, and not altogether exaggerated, description of the manner in which English public opinion is made up on Eastern questions. Conversing, he says, with a Druse of the Lebanon long before this particular outbreak, he observed to the Druse, "You get up one morning and cut each other's throats; then people at Beyrout or elsewhere sit down and write letters." One says the Maronites are a very virtuous and oppressed people of Christians; another says they are served right, for they are only Roman Catholics. One says the Druses have done it all; they are savages; another the Turks have done it all; they are ferocious, perfidious, and fanatic. Then the people in London begin to write, who dwell in rooms on the housetop." This, it is to be understood, is Mr. Urquhart's playful way of describing the authors of newspaper articles, whom, in accordance with a tradition still prevailing when he was young, he assumes to be the occupants of garrets. "They say these people are very ill off; we must protect them; or we must punish them; or we must convert them. Then they all cry out, 'We must put down the Turkish Government.' After this has been written and paid for, it is printed; and after it is printed it is sold. Then all the nation buys it, and after it has bought it it reads it while it is eating its breakfast. Then each man goes out and meets his friends and talks it. This is the way the people of England occupy themselves about their affairs; and they call it by a name which being translated means universal guess. They smile then at each other, and say 'We are great men; we know all that is doing in the world, we govern the world; like unto us were none since Noah came out of the ark.'" Mr. Urquhart was a very clever, self-opinionated, and often curiously wrong-headed man. He had seen much of the East and had a knowledge of Eastern

ways and Eastern history which few Englishmen could equal. But he was under the absolute dominion of a mania with regard to Russia which distorted all his faculties. Men who found that he could entertain as articles of faith some theories about English diplomacy and English statesmen which seemed almost too wild for the ordinary occupant of a madhouse, might well begin to doubt whether all his knowledge of the East must necessarily help him to any better conclusions about Asia than he had formed about the political men and affairs of his own country. In the passage which has been quoted he did, however, give a very fair exposition of the confusion of idea that prevailed in England about the disturbances in Syria. He was also able to make it quite clear that, whatever the Druses were, they were not Mussulmans. The nooks of the Mountain, a well-informed writer says, "are not more sequestered from the dwellings of man than the faith of the Druses is segregated from that of Christian or Moslem." Mr. Urquhart ascribed the cause of the quarrels to the intervention of the European Powers in 1840, and of course to the secret influence of Russia working through that intervention. It is probable that the intervention did help, in one sense, to lead to the dissensions. The Great Powers started in 1840 and in 1841 a variety of theories about the better government of the Lebanon, one of which was that it should have two governors, a Druse and a Maronite. This was found impracticable, owing to the fact that in many parts of the Lebanon the two sects were living in inextricable companionship. The bare idea, however, was probably effectual in starting a new sort of rivalry. The Porte did finally grant a certain amount of administrative autonomy to the Lebanon, and, having granted this under pressure, it is not unlikely that they were anxious to reduce it to as little of practical value as possible. Probably the Porte was not unwilling to make use of any antipathy existing between Druses and Maronites. The Porte was also under the impression, rightly or wrongly, that the Maronites were planning an attack upon the Druses with the object of shaking off the Turkish yoke. It may be that Constantinople was anxious to anticipate matters, and to call in the fanaticism of the Druses to rid them of the

Maronites. Certainly the manner in which the Turkish officials at first seemed to connive at the massacres might have justified any such suspicion in the mind of Europe.

England and France took strong and decisive steps. They resolved upon instant intervention to restore tranquillity in the Lebanon. A convention was drawn up, to which all the Great Powers of Europe agreed, and which Turkey had to accept. By the convention England and France were entrusted with the duty of restoring order. France undertook to supply the troops required in the first instance; further requirements were to be met as the intervening Powers might think fit. The intervening Powers pledged themselves reciprocally not to seek for any territorial advantage or exclusive influence. England sent out Lord Dufferin to act as her Commissioner; and Lord Dufferin accomplished his task with as much spirit as judgment. The Turkish Government, to do it justice, had at last shown great energy in punishing the authors and the abettors of the massacres. The Sultan sent out Fuad Pasha, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the Lebanon; and Fuad Pasha showed no mercy to the promoters of the disturbances, or even to the highly-placed official abettors of them. The governor of Damascus and the commander of the Turkish troops suffered death for their part in the transactions, and about sixty persons were publicly executed in the city, of whom the greater number belonged to the Turkish police force. Lord Dufferin described what he actually saw in such a manner as to prove that even alarmed rumour had hardly exaggerated the horrors of the time. Lord Dufferin tells that he came to Deir-el-Kamer a few days after the massacre. "Almost every house was burnt, and the street crowded with dead bodies, some of them stripped and mutilated in every possible way. My road led through some of the streets; my horse could not even pass, for the bodies were literally piled up. Most of those I examined had many wounds, and in each case the right hand was either entirely or nearly cut off; the poor wretch, in default of weapons, having instinctively raised his arm to parry the blow aimed at him. I saw little children of not

more than four years old stretched on the ground, and old men with grey beards."

The intervention was successful in restoring order and in providing for the permanent peace of Syria. It had one great recommendation; it was thorough. It was in that respect a model intervention. To intervene in the affairs of any foreign State is a task of great responsibility. The cases are few indeed in which it can be justified or even excused. But it has long been to all seeming a principle of European statesmanship that Turkey is a country in the government of which it is necessary for other Powers to intervene from time to time. The whole of the policy of what is called the Eastern Question is based on the assumption that Turkey is to be upheld by external influence, and that being thus virtually protected she is liable also to be rebuked and kept in order. Now there may be some doubt as to the propriety of intervening at all in the affairs of Turkey, but there can be no doubt that when intervention does take place it should be prompt, and it should be thorough. The independence of Turkey is at an end when a conference of foreign Ministers sits round a table to direct what she is to do; it is then merely a question of convenience and expediency as to the extent to which intervention shall go. Nothing can be more illogical and more pernicious in its way than to say, "We will intervene just far enough to take away from the Turkish Government its domestic supremacy and its responsibility; but, out of consideration for its feelings, or its convenience, we will not intervene far enough to make it certain that what we think necessary shall be promptly and efficiently done." In the case of the Syrian disturbances the intervention was conducted on a practical principle. The Great Powers, acting on the assumption, which alone could justify their interference, that Turkey was not in a condition to restore order herself, proceeded to do this for her in the most energetic and complete manner. The consent of Turkey was not considered necessary. The Sultan was distinctly informed that the interference would take place whether he approved of it or not. When the intervention had succeeded in thoroughly restoring order, representatives of the Great

Powers assembled in Constantinople unanimously agreed that a Christian governor of the Lebanon should be appointed in subordination to the Sultan; and the Sultan had, of course, no choice but to agree to this proposition. The French troops evacuated Syria in June 1861, and thereby much relieved the minds of many Englishmen, who had long forgotten all about the domestic affairs of the Lebanon in their alarm lest the French Imperial troops, having once set foot in Syria, should not easily be induced to quit the country again. This was not merely a popular and ignorant alarm. On June 26, 1861, Lord Palmerston wrote to the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Henry Bulwer, "I am heartily glad we have got the French out of Syria, and a hard job it was to do so. The arrangement made for the future government of the Lebanon will, I dare say, work sufficiently well to prevent the French from having any pretext for returning thither." In the same letter Lord Palmerston makes a characteristic allusion to the death of the Sultan of Turkey, which had taken place the very day before. "Abd-ul-Medjid was a good-hearted and weak-headed man, who was running two horses to the goal of perdition—his own life and that of his empire. Luckily for the empire his own life won the race." Then Palmerston adds, "If the accounts we have heard of the new Sultan are true, we may hope that he will restore Turkey to her proper position among the Powers of Europe." A day or two after, Lord Wodehouse, on the part of the Government, expressed to the House of Lords a confident hope that a new era was about to dawn upon Turkey. Another new era!

It would hardly be fitting to close the history of this stormy year without giving a few lines to record the peaceful end of a life which had, through all its earlier parts, been one of "sturt and strife." Quietly in his Kensington home passed away, in the late autumn of this year, Thomas Cochrane—the gallant Dundonald, the hero of the Basque Roads, the volunteer who lent his genius and his courage to the cause of Brazil, of Chili, and of Greece; a sort of Peterborough of the waves, a "Swiss of heaven." Lord Dundonald had been the victim of cruel, although not

surely intentional, injustice. He was accused, as every one knows, of having had a share in the famous stockjobbing frauds of 1814; he was tried, found guilty, sentenced to fine and imprisonment; expelled from the House of Commons, dismissed from the service which he had helped to make yet more illustrious than he found it; and deprived of all his public honours. He lived to see his innocence believed in as well by his enemies as by his friends. William IV. reinstated him in his naval rank, and Queen Victoria had the congenial task of completing the restoration of his well-won honours. It was not, however, until many years after his death that the country fully acquitted itself of the mere money debt which it owed to Lord Dundonald and his family. Cochrane was a Radical in politics, and for some years sat as a colleague of Sir Francis Burdett in the representation of Westminster. He carried on in the House of Commons many a bitter argument with Mr. John Wilson Croker, when the latter was Secretary to the Admiralty. It cannot be doubted that Cochrane's political views and his strenuous way of asserting them made him many enemies, and that some men were glad of the opportunity for revenge which was given by the accusation got up against him. His was an impatient spirit, little suited for the discipline of parliamentary life. His tongue was often bitter, and he was too apt to assume that a political opponent must be a person unworthy of respect. Even in his own service he was impatient of rebuke. To those under his command he was always genial and brotherly; but to those above him he was sometimes wanting in that patient submission which is an essential quality of those who would learn how to command with most success. Cochrane's true place was on his quarter-deck; his opportunity came in the extreme moment of danger. Then his spirit asserted itself. His gift was that which wrenches success out of the very jaws of failure; he saw his way most clearly when most others began to despair. During part of his later life he had been occupying himself with some inventions of his own—some submarine methods, for blowing up ships, some engines which were, by their terrible destructiveness, to abridge the struggles



and agonies of war. At the time of the Crimean War he offered to the Government to destroy Sebastopol in a few hours by some of his plans. The proposal was examined by a committee, and was not accepted. It was his death, on October 30, 1860, which recalled to the mind of the living generation the hero whose exploits had divided the admiration of their fathers with those of Nelson, of Collingwood, and of Sidney Smith. A new style of naval warfare has come up since those days, and perhaps Cochrane may be regarded as the last of the old sea-kings.

## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA

CIVIL war broke out in the United States. The long threatened had come to pass. Abraham Lincoln's election as President, brought about by the party divisions of the Southerners among themselves, seemed to the South the beginning of a new order of things, in which they and their theories of government would no longer predominate. They felt that the peculiar institution, on which they believed their prosperity and their pride to depend, was threatened with extinction, and they preferred secession to such a result. In truth the two sets of institutions were incompatible. A system founded on slavery could not be worked much longer in combination with the political and social institutions of the Northern States. The struggle was one for life or death between slavery and the principles of modern society. When things had come to this pass it is hardly worth stopping to consider what particular event it was which brought about the actual collision. If the election of Mr. Lincoln had not supplied the occasion something else would have furnished it. Those who are acquainted with the history of the great emancipation struggle in America know very well that if the South had not seceded from the Union, some of the Northern States would sooner or later have done so. Every day in the

Northern States saw an increase in the number of those who would rather have seceded than give further countenance to the system of slavery. It was a peculiarity of that system that it could not stand still; it could not rest content with tolerance and permission to hold what it already possessed. It must have new ground, new fields to occupy. It must get more or die. Most of the Abolitionists would rather themselves secede than yield any more to slavery.

We are chiefly concerned in this history with the American Civil War in so far as it affected England. It becomes part of our history, by virtue of the *Alabama* question and the Treaty of Washington. It is important to introduce a short narrative of the events which led to the long dispute between England and the United States, a dispute which brought us more than once to the very edge of war, and which was only settled by the almost unparalleled concession of the Washington Treaty. The Southern States, led by South Carolina, seceded. Their delegates assembled at Montgomery, in Alabama, on February 4, 1861, to agree upon a constitution. A Southern confederation was formed, with Mr. Jefferson Davis as its President. Mr. Davis announced the determination of the South to maintain its independence by the final arbitrament of the sword, "if passion or lust of dominion should cloud the judgment or influence the ambition of the North." This announcement was made on February 18, 1861, and on March 4 following the new President of the United States entered formally into office. Mr. Lincoln announced that he had no intention to interfere with the institution of slavery in any State where it existed; that the law gave him no power to do so, even if he had the inclination; but that, on the other hand, no State could, upon its own mere motion, lawfully get out of the Union; that acts of violence against the authority of the United States must be regarded as insurrectionary or revolutionary. There was still an impression in this country, and to some extent in America, that an invitation was thus held out by Mr. Lincoln to the Southern States to enter into peaceful negotiations, with a view to a dissolution of partnership. But if there was any such intention in the

mind of Mr. Lincoln, or any possibility of carrying it into effect, all such contingencies were put out of the question by the impetuous action of South Carolina. This State had been the first to secede, and it was the first to commit an act of war. The traveller in South Carolina, as he stands on one of the quays of Charleston and looks towards the Atlantic, sees the sky line across the harbour broken by a heavy-looking solid square fort, which soon became famous in the war. This was Fort Sumter, a place built on an artificial island, with walls some sixty feet high and eight to twelve feet thick. It was in the occupation of the Federal Government, as of course were the defences of all the harbours of the Union. It is, perhaps, not necessary to say that while each State made independently its local laws, the Federal Government and Congress had the charge of all business of national interest, customs duties, treaties, the army and navy, and the coast defences. The Federal Government had therefore a garrison in Fort Sumter, and when there seemed a possibility of civil war, they were anxious to reinforce it. A vessel which they sent for the purpose was fired at, from a great island in the harbour, by the excited Secessionists of South Carolina, and on April 12 the Confederates, who had erected batteries on the mainland for the purpose, began to bombard the Fort. The little garrison had no means of resistance, and after a harmless bombardment of two days it surrendered, and Fort Sumter was in the hands of the Secessionists of South Carolina. The effect of this piece of news on the mind of the North has been well and tersely described by a writer of the time. It was as if while two persons were still engaged in a peaceful discussion as to some claim of right, one suddenly brought the debate to a close by giving the other a box on the ear. There was an end to all negotiations ; thenceforward only strokes could arbitrate.

Four days after, President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand men to volunteer in re-establishing the Federal authority over the rebel States. President Davis immediately announced his intention to issue letters of marque. President Lincoln declared the Southern ports under blockade. On May 8 Lord John Russell announced

in the House of Commons, that after consulting the law officers of the Crown the Government were of opinion that the Southern Confederacy must be recognised as a belligerent power. On May 13 the neutrality proclamation was issued by the Government, warning all subjects of her Majesty from enlisting, on land or sea, in the service of Federals or Confederates, supplying munitions of war, equipping vessels for privateering purposes, engaging in transport service, or doing any other act calculated to afford assistance to either belligerent. This was, in fact, the recognition of the Southern Confederacy as a belligerent power; and this was the first act on the part of England which gave offence in the North. It was regarded there as an act of unseemly and even indecent haste, as evidence of an overstrained anxiety to assist and encourage the Southern rebels. This interpretation was, to some extent, borne out by the fact that the English Government did not wait for the daily-expected arrival of Mr. Adams, the new American minister, to hear what he might have to say before resolving on issuing the proclamation. Yet it is certain that the proclamation was made with no unfriendly motive. It was made at the instance of some of the most faithful friends the Northern cause had on this side of the Atlantic, conspicuous among whom in recommending it was Mr. W. E. Forster. If such a proclamation had not been issued the English Government could not have undertaken to recognise the blockade of the Southern ports. If there was no *bellum* going on, the commerce of the world could not be expected to recognise President Lincoln's blockade of Charleston and Savannah and New Orleans.

International law on the subject is quite clear. A state cannot blockade its own ports. It can only blockade the ports of an enemy. It can, indeed, order a closure of its own ports. But a closure of the ports would not have been so effective for the purposes of the Federal Government as a blockade. It would have been a matter of municipal law only. An offender against the ordinance of closure could be only dealt with lawfully in American waters; an offender against the decree of blockade could be pursued into the open sea. In any case Mr. Lincoln's Government chose

the blockade. They had previously announced that the crews of Confederate privateers would be treated as pirates, but their proclamation of the blockade compelled them to recede from that declaration. It was, indeed, a threat that modern humanity and the public feeling of the whole Northern States would never have allowed them to carry out, and which Mr. Lincoln himself, whose temper always leaned to mercy, would never have thought of putting into effect. The proclamation of a blockade compelled the Federal Government to treat privateers as belligerents. It could not but compel foreign States to admit the belligerent rights of the Southern Confederation.

In England the friends of the North, or some of them at least, were anxious that the recognition should take place as quickly as possible, in order that effect should be given to the President's proclamation. The English Government had trouble enough afterwards to resist the importunity of those at home and abroad who thought they ought to break the blockade in the interests of European trade. They could have no excuse for recognising it if they did not also recognise that there was a war going on which warranted it. Therefore, whether the recognition of the Southern Confederates as belligerents was wise or unwise, timely or premature, it was not done in any spirit of unfriendliness to the North, or at the spurring of any Southern partisans. It was done at the urgency of friends of the North, and in what was believed to be the interest of President Lincoln's Government. It seems to us that in any case the recognition was fully justified. The proclamation began by setting forth that "hostilities had unhappily begun between the Government of the United States and certain States styling themselves the Confederate States of America." Before its issue Fort Sumter had been taken, Mr. Seward, the new Federal Secretary of State, had announced, in a despatch, that the insurgents had "instituted revolution with open, flagrant, deadly war"; and that the United States had "accepted this civil war as an inevitable necessity." Many days before the proclamation was issued the New York Chamber of Commerce had stated that secession had culminated in war, and the judges of the higher courts

had decided that a state of war existed. Under such circumstances it seems hardly possible to contend that England was bound by any principle of law, international or other, to withhold her recognition.

With the proclamation of neutrality on the part of her Majesty's Government began, curiously enough, the long diplomatic controversy which was carried on between this country and the United States. The correspondence spreads over years. It is maintained principally by Earl Russell, Mr. Adams, American minister in London, and Mr. Seward, American Secretary of State. The diplomatic correspondence is conducted, as might be expected, with unvarying courtesy, and with at least the outward expression of good temper; but it deepens sometimes in tone and earnestness, so that any reader can see that it is reaching a tension not likely to be long kept up. More than once it becomes evident that the States thus represented are on the verge of a serious quarrel. The impression on the part of the United States evidently is, all throughout, that England is the concealed and bitter enemy of the Union, and is seizing every possible opportunity to do it harm. The first cause of dispute is the recognition of belligerent rights. Then there comes the seizure of the Confederate envoys in the *Trent*, which England could not permit, and which apparently the public of the United States could not forgive her for not being able to permit, and thus putting them in the wrong. Far more serious as a cause of quarrel was the career of the *Alabama* and her kindred vessels. The Mexican expedition was a grievance to the North, connected as it was with the supposed inclination of the English Government to follow the promptings of the French Emperor, and concede to the Southern Confederates their actual recognition as an independent state.

It is necessary to endeavour to follow the course of public opinion in England, and ascertain if possible the meaning of its various changes. Let it be firmly stated at the outset, as a matter of justice, that it was not any feeling of sympathy with slavery which influenced so many Englishmen in their support of the South. No real evidence exists of any change in public opinion of that kind. It is true that sometimes

a heated champion of the South did, when driven to bay for argument, contend that after all perhaps slavery was not quite so bad a thing as people fancied: The *Times* did once venture to suggest that the Scriptures contained no express interdiction of slavery; but no great stress even there was laid upon such an argument; and it might be doubted whether the opinion of any rational man, on the slavery question, was changed in this country by sympathy with the South. On the contrary, strange as it may seem at first, the dislike of many Englishmen to the slave system converted them first into opponents of the North and next into partisans of the South. An impression got abroad that the Northern statesmen were not sincere in their reprobation of slavery, and that they only used the arguments and the feeling against it as a means of endeavouring to crush the South. Many Englishmen could not understand—some of them perhaps would not understand—that a Northern statesman might very well object to breaking up the Union in order to put down slavery, and might yet, when an enemy endeavoured to destroy the Union, make up his mind with perfect consistency that the time had come to get rid of the slave system once for all. The statesmen of the North were not to be classed as Abolitionists. Not many men in office, or likely just then to be in office, were professed opponents of slavery. Most of them regarded it as a very objectionable institution which the Southern States had unfortunately inherited, which no one would think of introducing then if it had not been introduced before, but which nevertheless it was not worth risking a national convulsion for the sake of trying to root out at once. They would have been willing to trust to time and education, and all the civilising processes, for the gradual extinction of the system. Many of them had even known so many good and kind Southern slave-owners, that they could not feel a common hatred for all the upholders of the unfortunate institution. Men like Mr. Lincoln himself would have gladly kept to the Union even though, for the present and for some time to come, Union meant the toleration of slavery in the South. Two extreme parties there were who would not compromise:

the planter faction of the South and the Abolitionists of New England. The planters were not content that their institution should be tolerated; they would have it extended and made supreme. The Abolitionists took their stand on principle; slavery was to them simply a crime, and they would have nothing to do with the accursed thing. When at last the inevitable collision came, there was nothing inconsistent or unreasonable in the position of the Northern statesman who said, "I am opposed to all sudden changes in our constitution; I would not have broken up the Union on the question of Southern slavery; but now that the Southerners themselves have chosen to secede, and to begin a civil war, I say the time has come to get done with this long-standing cause of quarrel, and to decree once for all the extinction of the slave system."

That came, in fact, as the war went on, to be the position of Mr. Lincoln and of many other Northern statesmen. It was the position which practical statesmen would have been likely to take, and might have been expected to take. Yet it seemed to many Englishmen to argue mere hypocrisy that a man should be intolerant of slavery when it led to secession and civil war, if he had been willing to put up with it for the sake of peace. Again, Englishmen insisted that the Northern statesmen were not going into the war with an unmixed motive; as if any state ever yet went to war with one single and undiluted purpose. A good deal was heard about the manner in which the coloured race were excluded from society in New York and the Northern States generally. The exclusiveness was assuredly narrow-minded and bad enough; but it is one thing to say a coloured man shall not sit next us in a theatre or a church, that he shall not go to school with one's son or marry one's daughter, and it is quite another thing to say that we have a right to scourge the coloured man to death, to buy his son for a slave, and sell his daughter at the auction-block. A citizen of one of the Canadian provinces might strongly object to the society of the Red Indian in any form, and yet might be willing to arm against a system which would reduce the Red Indian to a condition of slavery. Not a few Englishmen condemned, boldly and out of hand, the whole



principle of coercion in political affairs. They declared that the North had no right to put down secession; that the South had a right to secede. Yet the same men had upheld the heaven-appointed right of England to put down the rebellion in India, and would have drenched, if need were, Ireland in blood rather than allow her to withdraw from a partnership into which, after all, unlike the Southern States, she had never voluntarily entered.

At first the feeling of Englishmen was almost unanimously in favour of the North. It was thought that the Southern States would be allowed quietly to secede, and most Englishmen did not take a great interest in the matter, or, when they did, were inclined to regard the Southerners as a turbulent and troublesome set, who had better be permitted to go off with their peculiar institution and keep it all to themselves. When it became apparent that the secession must lead to war, then many of the same Englishmen began to put the blame on the North for making the question any cause of disturbance to the world. There was a kind of impatient feeling as if we and the world in general had no right to be troubled with these American quarrels, as if it was unfair to us that our cotton trade should be interrupted and we ourselves put to inconvenience for a dispute about secession. There clearly would have been no war and no disturbance if only the North had agreed to let the South go, and therefore people on this side of the Atlantic set themselves to find good cause for blaming the statesmen who did not give in to anything rather than disturb the world with their obstinacy and their Union. Out of this condition of feeling came the resolve to find the North in the wrong; and out of that resolve came with many the discovery that the Northern statesmen were all hypocrites. Suddenly, as if to decide wavering minds, an event was reported which made hosts of admirers for the South in England. The battle of Bull Run took place on July 21, 1861, and the raw levies of the North were defeated, thrown into confusion, and in some instances driven into ignominious flight.

This was not very surprising. The Southern men were infinitely better fitted for the beginning of a war than the

men of the North. The Southerners had always a taste for soldiering, and had kept up their state militia systems with an energy and exactness which the business-men of the North had neither the time nor the inclination to imitate. The Southern militia systems were splendid training schools for arms, and became the nucleus each of an excellent army when at last the war broke out. The Northern Government had yielded to a popular cry, and made a premature movement on Richmond, in Virginia, now the Southern capital. It was not very surprising, therefore, that the South should have won the first battle. It was not very surprising either if some of the hastily-raised Northern regiments of volunteers should have proved wretched soldiers, and should have yielded to the sudden influence of panic. But when the news reached England, it was received by vast numbers with exultation and with derision at the expense of the "Yankees." It had been well settled that the Yankees were hypocrites and low fellows before; but now it came out that they were mere runaways and cowards. The English people, for a brave nation, are surprisingly given to accusing their neighbours of cowardice. They have a perfect mania for discovering cowardice all over the world. Napoleon was a coward to a past generation; the French were for a long time cowards; the Italians were cowards; at the time of the Schleswig-Holstein war the Germans were cowards; the Russians still are cowards. In 1861 the Yankees were the typical cowards of the earth. A very flame of enthusiasm leaped up for the brave South, which though so small in numbers had contrived with such spirit and ease to defeat the Yankees. Something of chivalry there was, no doubt, in the wish that the weaker side should win; but that chivalry was strongly dashed with the conviction that after all the South had the better fighters and was sure to succeed in the end; that the American Union was in some mysterious way a sort of danger to England, and that the sooner it was broken up the better. Mr. Cobden afterwards accused the English Government for having dealt with the United States as if they were dealing with Brazil or some such weak and helpless state. It is important for the fair under-

standing and appreciation of the events that followed, to remember that there was, among all the advocates of the South in England, a very general conviction that the North was sure to be defeated and broken up, and was therefore in no sense a formidable power. It is well also to bear in mind that there were only two European states which entertained this feeling and allowed it to be everywhere understood. The Southern scheme found support only in England and in France. In all other European countries the sympathy of people and Government alike went with the North. In most places the sympathy arose from a detestation of slavery. In Russia, or at least with the Russian Government, it arose from a dislike of rebellion. But the effect was the same: that assurances of friendship came from all civilised countries to the Northern States except from England and France alone. One of the latest instructions given by Cavour on his deathbed in this year, was that an assurance should be sent to the Federal Government that Italy could give its sympathies to no movement which tended to the perpetuation of slavery. The Pope, Pius IX., and Cardinal Antonelli repeatedly expressed their hopes for the success of the Northern cause. On the other hand, the Emperor of the French fully believed that the Southern cause was sure to triumph, and that the Union would be broken up; he was even very willing to hasten what he assumed to be the unavoidable end. He was anxious that England should join with him in some measures to facilitate the success of the South by recognising the Government of the Southern Confederation. He got up the Mexican intervention, of which we shall have occasion presently to speak, which assuredly he would never have attempted if he had not been persuaded that the Union was on the eve of disruption. He was not without warning. Many eminent Frenchmen, well acquainted with America, urged on him the necessity of caution. His cousin, Prince Napoleon, went over to America and surveyed the condition of affairs from both points of view, talked with the leaders on both sides, visited both camps, and came back impressed with the conviction that the Southern movement for independence would

be a failure. The Emperor Napoleon, however, held to his own views and his own schemes. He had afterwards reason to curse the day when he reckoned on the break-up of the Union and persuaded himself that there was no occasion to take account of the Northern strength. Yet in France the French people in general were on the side of the North. Only the Emperor and his Government were on that of the South. In England the vast majority of what are called the influential classes came to be heart and soul with the South. The Government was certainly not so, but it can hardly be doubted that the Government allowed itself sometimes to be overborne by the clamour of a West End majority, and gave the North only too much reason to suspect that its defeats were welcome to those in authority in England. Lord Palmerston made some jesting allusion in a public speech to the "unfortunate rapid movements" of the Northern soldiers at Bull Run; and the jibe was bitterly resented by many Americans.

At first the Northern States counted with absolute confidence upon the sympathy of England. The one reproach Englishmen had always been casting in their face was that they did not take any steps to put down slavery. Not long before this time Lord Brougham, at a meeting of a Statistical Congress in London, where the American minister happened to be present, delivered a sort of lecture at him on the natural equality of the black with the white. All England had just been in a state of wild excitement about the case of the fugitive slave Anderson. An escaped slave, who had taken refuge in Canada, was demanded back by the United States Government—at that time, be it remembered, still a Southern Government—because in trying to escape he had killed one of those who strove to stay his flight and capture him. The idea seemed monstrous to Englishmen, that any British or colonial court of law should give back as a criminal a man who had only done that which English law would warrant him in doing—resisted, even to slaying, an attempt to make him a slave. The fugitive was not given up to the United States. The colonial courts discharged him from custody on the ground of some informality in the warrant of detention, and he

came to England. But the Court of Queen's Bench here had already issued a writ of *habeas corpus* to bring him before it, on the ground that his detention in Toronto, even while waiting the decision of the colonial court, was illegal; and if it had not so happened that he was released from custody before the writ could interfere, some very important and difficult questions in international law might have had to be decided. In this country public opinion was warmly in favour of the release of Anderson, and would have gone any length to save him from being surrendered to his captors. Public opinion was expressing itself soundly and justly. It would have amounted to a recognition of slavery if an English court had consented, on any ground, to hand over as a criminal a man who merely resisted an attempt to drag him back into servitude. This was just before the accession of Mr. Lincoln to office. It was the common expectation of the Northern States that England would welcome the new state of things, under which the demand for the return of a fugitive slave was never likely to insult them. The English Government had had for years and years incessant difficulties with the Government of the United States, while the latter was in the hands of the South. Coloured subjects of the Queen had been seized in Charleston and carried off into slavery, and it was not possible to get any redress. For years we had been listening to complaints from our Governments about the arrogance and insolence of the American statesmen in office, who were all more or less under the control of the South. It is easy to understand, therefore, how Mr. Lincoln and his friends counted on the sympathy of the English Government and the English people, and how surprised they were when they found English statesmen, journalists, preachers, and English society generally, deriding their misfortunes and apparently wishing for the success of their foes. The surprise changed into a feeling of bitter disappointment, and that gave place to an angry temper, which exaggerated every symptom of ill-will, distorted every fact, and saw wrong even where there only existed an honest purpose to do right.

It was while this temper was beginning to light up on

both sides of the Atlantic that the unfortunate affair of the *Trent* occurred. The Confederate Government had resolved to send envoys to Europe to arrange, if possible, for the recognition of the Southern States. Mr. W. L. Yancey, an extreme advocate of the doctrine of state sovereignty, had already been in Europe with this purpose; and now Mr. Davis was anxious to have a regular envoy in London and another in Paris. Mr. Slidell, a prominent Southern lawyer and politician, was to represent the South at the Court of the Emperor Napoleon, provided he could obtain recognition there; and Mr. James Murray Mason, the author of the Fugitive Slave Law, was to be despatched with a similar mission to the Court of Queen Victoria. The two Southern envoys escaped together from Charleston, one dark and wet October night, in a small steamer, and got to Havana. There they took passage for Southampton in the English mail steamer *Trent*. The United States sloop of war, *San Jacinto*, happened to be returning from the African coast about the same time. Her commander, Captain Wilkes, was a somewhat hot-tempered and indiscreet officer. He was cruising about in quest of the Confederate privateer *Sumter*, and while at Havana he learned that the Confederate agents, with their secretaries, were on their way to Europe. He determined to intercept them. Two hundred and fifty miles from Havana he awaited them in the Bahama Channel. The *Trent* approached; he summoned her to heave to, and, his summons being disregarded, fired a shot across her bows. An armed party was then sent on board, and the Confederate envoys were seized, with their secretaries, and carried as prisoners on board the *San Jacinto*, despite the protest of the captain of the English steamer and from under the protection of the English flag. The prisoners were first carried to New York, and then confined in one of the forts in Boston harbour.

Now, there cannot be the slightest doubt of the illegality of this proceeding on the part of Captain Wilkes. It was not long, to be sure, since England had claimed and exercised a supposed right of the same kind. But such a claim had been given up, and could not, in 1861, have been

maintained by any civilised state. It was a claim which the United States Governments had especially exerted themselves to abolish. This was the view taken at once by President Lincoln, whose plain good sense served him in better stead than their special studies had served some Professors of International Law. We have it on the excellent authority of Dr. Draper, in his "History of the American Civil War," that Mr. Lincoln at once declared that the act of Captain Wilkes could not be sustained. He said, "This is the very thing the British captains used to do. They claimed the right of searching American ships and carrying men out of them. That was the cause of the war of 1812. Now, we cannot abandon our own principles. We shall have to give these men up and apologise for what we have done." This was, in fact, the course that the American Government had to take. Mr. Seward wrote a long letter in answer to Lord Russell's demand for the surrender of the prisoners, in which he endeavoured to make out that Captain Wilkes had acted in accordance with English precedents, but stated that he had not had any authority from the American Government to take such a course, and that the Government did not consider him to have acted in accordance with the law of nations. "It will be seen," Mr. Seward went on to say, "that this Government cannot deny the justice of the claim presented to us, in this respect, upon its merits. We are asked to do to the British nation what we have always insisted all nations ought to do unto us." He announced, therefore, that the four prisoners would be "cheerfully liberated." On January 1, 1862, the Confederate envoys were given up on the demand of the British Government, and sailed for Europe.

The question, then, it might be thought, was satisfactorily settled. Unfortunately, a great deal of harm had been done in the meantime. Popular clamour in the United States had entirely approved of the action of Captain Wilkes. A mass meeting held in Tammany Hall or the Cooper Institute of New York, or even in the less vehement Faneuil Hall of Boston, is not exactly an assembly qualified to give an authoritative decision on

questions of international law. The Secretary of the Navy, who ought to have known better but did not, had commended the action of the captain of the *San Jacinto*. A vote of thanks had been passed to Captain Wilkes in the House of Representatives, Washington, "for his arrest of the traitors Slidell and Mason." Under these circumstances, it is not surprising if people on this side of the ocean should have fancied that the United States were eager to sustain a great act of wrong done against us and against international law. But the arrest was so absolutely without justification that the English Government might well have known President Lincoln's Cabinet could not sustain it. The Governments of all the great European States promptly interposed their good advice, pointing out to Mr. Lincoln the impossibility of maintaining Captain Wilkes's act. The foreign envoys in Washington, and the Orleans princes then in that city, had given the same good advice. Lord Palmerston's Government acted, however, as if an instant appeal to arms must be necessary. Lord Russell sent out to Washington a peremptory demand for the liberation of the envoys and an apology, and insisted on an answer within seven days. Troops were at once ordered out to Canada, and a proclamation was issued forbidding the export of arms and munitions of war. All this was done, although on the very day that Lord Russell was despatching his peremptory letter to Washington, Mr. Seward was writing to London to assure her Majesty's Government that the arrest had been made without any authority from the United States Government, and that the President and his advisers were then considering the proper course to take. The fact that Mr. Seward's letter had been received was, for some reason or other, not made publicly known in England at the time, and the English people were left to believe that the action of Captain Wilkes either was the action of the American Government or had that Government's approval. Public feeling therefore raged and raved a good deal on both sides. American statesmen believed that the English Government was making a wanton and offensive display of a force which they had good reason to know would never be needed. The English public was



left under the impression that the American statesmen were only yielding to the display of force. The release of the prisoners did not seem to our people to come with a good grace. It did not seem to the American people to have been asked or accepted with a good grace. Mr. Seward might as well, perhaps, when he had made up his mind to restore the prisoners, have spared himself the trouble of what the Scotch would call a long "haver," to show that if he acted as England had done he should not have given them up at all. But Mr. Seward always was a terribly eloquent despatch writer, and he could not, we may suppose, persuade himself to forego the opportunity of issuing a dissertation. On the other hand, Lord Palmerston's demeanour and language were what he would probably himself have called, in homely language, "bumptious" if some one else had been in question. Lord Palmerston could not deny himself the pleasure of a burst of cheap popularity, and of seeming to flourish the flag of England in the face of presumptuous foes. The episode was singularly unfortunate in its effect upon the temper of the majority in England and America. From that moment there was a formidable party in England who detested the North, and a formidable party in the North who detested England.

## CHAPTER XLIV

### THE CRUISE OF THE "ALABAMA"

THE cause of peace between nations lost a good friend at the close of 1861. The Prince Consort died. It is believed that the latest advice he gave on public affairs had reference to the dispute between England and the United States about the seizure of the Confederate envoys, and that the advice recommended calmness and forbearance on the part of the English Government. It is not to be supposed, of course, that the Prince Consort even thought of suggesting that the English Government should

acquiesce in what had been done, or allow the wrong to remain unredressed. He knew, as every reasonable man might have known, that the error of the American sailor was unjustifiable, and would have to be atoned for; but he probably assumed that for that very reason the atonement might be awaited without excitement, and believed that it would neither be politic nor generous to make a show of compelling by force what must needs be conceded to justice. The death of the Prince Consort, lamentable in every way, was especially to be deplored at a time when influential counsels tending towards forbearance and peace were much needed in England. But it may be said, with literal truth, that when the news of the Prince's death was made known, its possible effect on the public affairs of England was forgotten or unthought of in the regret for the personal loss. Outside the precincts of Windsor Castle itself the event was wholly unexpected. Perhaps even within the precincts of the Castle there was little expectation up to the last that such a calamity was so near. The public had only learned a few days before that the Prince was unwell. On December 8 the *Court Circular* mentioned that he was confined to his room by a feverish cold. Then it was announced that he was "suffering from fever, unattended by unfavourable symptoms, but likely, from its symptoms, to continue for some time." This latter announcement appeared in the form of a bulletin on Wednesday, December 11. About the midnight of Saturday, the 14th, there was some sensation and surprise created throughout London by the tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's. Not many people even suspected the import of the unusual sound. It signified the death of the Prince Consort. He died at ten minutes before eleven that Saturday night, in the presence of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the Princesses Alice and Helena. The fever had become fierce and wasting on Friday, and from that time it was only a descent to death. Congestion of the lungs set in, the consequence of exhaustion; the Prince fell into utter weakness, and died conscious but without pain. He knew the Queen to the last. His latest look was turned to her.

The Prince Consort was little more than forty-two years of age when he died. He had always seemed to be in good, although not perhaps robust, health; and he had led a singularly temperate life. No one in the kingdom seemed less likely to be prematurely cut off; and his death came on the whole country with the shock of an utter surprise. The regret was universal; and the deepest regret was for the wife he had loved so dearly, and whom he was condemned so soon to leave behind. Every testimony has spoken to the singularly tender and sweet affection of the loving home the Queen and Prince had made for themselves. A domestic happiness rare even among the obscurest was given to them. It is one of the necessities of royal position that marriage should be seldom the union of hearts. The choice is limited by considerations which do not affect people in private life. The convenience of States has to be taken into account; the possible likings and dislikings of peoples whom perhaps the bride and bridegroom have never seen, and are never destined to see. A marriage among princes is, in nine cases out of ten, a marriage of convenience only. Seldom indeed is it made, as that of the Queen was, wholly out of love. Seldom is it even in love-matches when the instincts of love are not deceived and the affection grows stronger with the days. Every one knew that this had been the strange good fortune of the Queen of England. There was something poetic, romantic in the sympathy with which so many faithful and loving hearts turned to her in her hour of unspeakable distress.

We have already endeavoured to do justice to the character of the Prince Consort; to show what was his intellectual constitution, what were its strong points, and what its weaknesses and limitations. It is not necessary to go over that task again. It will be enough to say that the country which had not understood him at first was beginning more and more to recognise his genuine worth. Even those who are still far from believing that his influence in politics always worked with good result, are ready to admit that his influence, socially and morally, was that which must always come from the example of a pure and noble life. Of him it might fairly have been said in the

classic words that from his mouth "*nihil unquam insolens neque gloriosum exiit.*"

Perhaps, as we have been considering the influence of the Prince Consort on the councils of England during the earlier part of the American Civil War, it will be appropriate to quote some sentences in which the eminent American historian already mentioned, Dr. Draper, speaks of him. "One illustrious man there was in England," Dr. Draper says, "who saw that the great interests of the future would be better subserved by a sincere friendship with America than by the transitory alliances of Europe. He recognised the bonds of race. His prudent counsels strengthened the determination of the sovereign that the *Trent* controversy should have an honourable and peaceful solution. Had the desires of these, the most exalted personages in the realm, been more completely fulfilled, the administration of Lord Palmerston would not have cast a disastrous shadow on the future of the Anglo-Saxon race." Dr. Draper may be thought unjust to Lord Palmerston; he certainly is only just to the Prince Consort.

After the dispute about the *Trent*, the feeling between England and the United States became one of distrust, and almost of hostility. We cannot help thinking that the manner in which our Government managed the dispute, the superfluous display of force, like a pistol thrust at the head of a disputant whom mere argument is already bringing to reason, had a great deal to do with the growth of this bitter feeling. The controversy about the *Trent* was hardly over when Lord Russell and Mr. Adams were engaged in the more prolonged and far more serious controversy about the Confederate privateers.

The adventures of the Confederate cruisers began with the escape of a small schooner, the *Savannah*, from Charleston, in June 1861. It scoured the seas for a while as a privateer, and did some damage to the shipping of the Northern States. The *Sumter* had a more memorable career. She was under the command of Captain Semmes, who afterwards became famous, and during her time she did some little damage. The *Nashville* and the *Petrel* were also well known for a while. These were, however, but small vessels, and each

had only a short run of it. The first privateer which became really formidable to the shipping of the North was a vessel called in her earlier history the *Oreto*, but afterwards better known as the *Florida*. Within three months she had captured fifteen vessels. Thirteen of these she burnt, and the other two were converted into cruisers by the Confederate Government. The *Florida* was built in Birkenhead, nominally for the use of the Italian Government. She got out of the Mersey without detention or difficulty, although the American Minister had warned our Government of her real purpose. From that time Great Britain became what an American writer calls without any exaggeration "the naval base of the Confederacy." As fast as shipbuilders could work, they were preparing in British shipping yards a privateer navy for the Confederate Government. Mr. Gladstone said in a speech which was the subject of much comment, that Jefferson Davis had made a navy. The statement was at all events not literally correct. The English shipbuilders made the navy. Mr. Davis only ordered it and paid for it. Only seven Confederate privateers were really formidable to the United States, and of these five were built in British dockyards. We are not including in the list any of the actual war-vessels, the rams and ironclads, that British energy was preparing for the Confederate Government. We are now speaking merely of the privateers.

Of these privateers the most famous by far was the *Alabama*. It was the fortune of this vessel to be the occasion of the establishment of a new rule in the law of nations. It had nearly been her fortune to bring England and the United States into war. The *Alabama* was built expressly for the Confederate service in one of the dockyards of the Mersey. She was built by the house of Laird, a firm of the greatest reputation in the shipbuilding trade, and whose former head was the representative of Birkenhead in the House of Commons. While in process of construction she was called the "290"; and it was not until she had put to sea and hoisted the Confederate flag, and Captain Semmes, formerly commander of the *Sumter*, had appeared on her deck in full Confederate uniform, that

she took the name of the *Alabama*. During her career the *Alabama* captured nearly seventy Northern vessels. Her plan was always the same. She hoisted the British flag, and thus decoyed her intended victim within her reach; then she displayed the Confederate colours and captured her prize. Unless when there was some particular motive for making use of the captured vessels, they were burnt. Sometimes the blazing wreck became the means of decoying a new victim. Some American captain saw far off in the night the flames of a burning vessel reddening the sea. He steered to her aid; and when he came near enough, the *Alabama*, which was yet in the same waters and had watched his coming, fired her shot across his bows, hung out her flag, and made him her prisoner. One American captain bitterly complained that the fire, which seen across the waves at any other time became a summons to every seaman to hasten to the rescue, must thenceforward be a signal to him to hold his course and keep away from the blazing ship. The *Alabama* and her captain were of course much glorified in this country. Captain Semmes was eulogised as if his exploits had been those of another Cochrane or Kanaris. But the *Alabama* did not do much fighting; she preyed on merchant vessels that could not fight. She attacked where instant surrender must be the reply to her summons. Only twice, so far as we know, did she engage in a fight. The first time was with the *Hatteras*, a small blockading ship whose broadside was so unequal to that of the *Alabama* that she was sunk in a quarter of an hour. The second time was with the United States ship of war *Kearsarge*, whose size and armaments were about equal to her own. The fight took place off the French shore, near Cherbourg, and the career of the *Alabama* was finished in an hour. The Confederate rover was utterly shattered, and went down. Captain Semmes was saved by an English steam yacht, and brought to England to be made a hero for a while, and then forgotten. The cruise of the *Alabama* had lasted nearly two years. During this time she had continued to drive American commerce from the seas. Her later cruising days were unprofitable; for

American owners found it necessary to keep their vessels in port.

All this, however, it will be said, was but the fortune of war. America had not abolished privateering; and if the Northern States suffered from so clever and daring a privateer as Captain Semmes, it was of little use their complaining of it. If they could not catch and capture the *Alabama*, that was their misfortune or their fault. What the United States Government did complain of was something very different. They complained that the *Alabama* was practically an English vessel. She was built by English builders in an English dockyard; she was manned for the most part by an English crew; her guns were English; her gunners were English; many of the latter belonged to the Royal Naval Reserve, and were actually receiving pay from the English Government; she sailed under the English flag, was welcomed in English harbours, and never was in, or even saw, a Confederate port. As Mr. Forster put it very clearly and tersely, she was built by British shipbuilders and manned by a British crew; she drew prizes to destruction under a British flag, and was paid for by money borrowed from British capitalists.

Mr. Adams called the attention of the Government in good time to the fact that the *Alabama* was in course of construction in the dockyard of Messrs. Laird, and that she was intended for the Confederate Government. Lord Russell asked for proofs. Mr. Adams forwarded what he considered proof enough to make out a case for the detention of the vessel pending further inquiry. The opinion of an eminent English lawyer, now Sir Robert Collier, was also sent to Lord Russell by Mr. Adams. This opinion declared that the vessel ought to be detained by the Collector of Customs at Liverpool; and added that it appeared difficult to make out a stronger case of infringement of the Foreign Enlistment Act, "which, if not enforced on this occasion, is little better than a dead letter." The English Government still asked for proofs. It did not seem to have occurred to our authorities that if they set a little inquiry on foot themselves they might be able to conduct it much more efficiently than a stranger like Mr. Adams

could do. What Mr. Adams asked for was inquiry with a view to detention. He did not ask for the infringement of any domestic law of England; he only asked for such steps to be taken as would allow the law of England to be put in force. The argument of the correspondence on our side seemed to be that a stranger had no right to the protection of our laws until he could make out a case which would amount to the legal conviction of those against whom he asked to be protected. We cannot better summarise the correspondence than by saying it was as if Mr. Adams had forwarded affidavits alleging that there was a conspiracy to murder him, had named the persons against whom he made the charge, and asked for inquiry and protection from the Government; and the Government had answered that until he could make out a case for the actual conviction of the accused, it was no part of the business of our police to interfere.

Let us dispose of one simple question of fact. There never was the slightest doubt on the mind of any one about the business for which the vessel in the Birkenhead dockyard was destined. There was no attempt at concealment in the matter. Newspaper paragraphs described the gradual construction of the Confederate cruiser, as if it were a British vessel of war that Messrs. Laird had in hand. There never was any question about her destination. Openly and in the face of day she was built by the Laird firm for the Confederate service. The Lairds built her as they would have built any vessel for any one who ordered it and could pay for it. We see no particular reason for blaming them. They certainly made no mystery of the matter then or after. Whatever technical difficulties might have intervened, it is clear that no real doubt on the mind of the Government had anything to do with the delays that took place. At last, Lord Russell asked for the opinion of the Queen's Advocate. Time was pressing; the cruiser was nearly ready for sea. Everything seemed to be against us. The Queen's Advocate happened to be sick at the moment, and there was another delay. At last he gave his opinion that the vessel ought to be detained. The opinion came just too late. The



*Alabama* had got to sea ; her cruise of nearly two years began. She went upon her destroying course with the cheers of English sympathisers and the rapturous tirades of English newspapers glorifying her. Every misfortune that befell an American merchantman was received in this country with a roar of delight. When Mr. Bright brought on the question in the House of Commons, Mr. Laird declared that he would rather be known as the builder of a dozen *Alabamas*, than be a man who, like Mr. Bright, had set class against class ; and the majority of the House applauded him to the echo. Lord Palmerston peremptorily declared that in this country we were not in the habit of altering our laws to please a foreign State ; a declaration which came with becoming effect from the author of the abortive Conspiracy Bill, got up to propitiate the Emperor of the French.

The building of vessels for the Confederates began to go on with more boldness than ever. Two iron rams of the most formidable kind were built and about to be launched in 1863 for the purpose of forcibly opening the Southern ports and destroying the blockading vessels. Mr. Adams kept urging on Lord Russell, and for a long time in vain, that something must be done to stop their departure. Lord Russell at first thought the British Government could not interfere in any way. Mr. Adams pressed and protested, and at length was informed that the matter was "now under the serious consideration of her Majesty's Government." At last on September 5, Mr. Adams wrote to tell Lord Russell that one of the ironclad vessels was on the point of departure from this kingdom on its hostile errand against the United States ; and added, "it would be superfluous in me to point out to your lordship that this is war." On September 8 Mr. Adams received the following : "Lord Russell presents his compliments to Mr. Adams, and has the honour to inform him that instructions have been issued which will prevent the departure of the two ironclad vessels from Liverpool."

Throughout the whole of the correspondence Lord Russell took up one position. He insisted that the

Government could only act upon the domestic laws of England, and were not bound to make any alteration in these laws to please a foreign State. Nothing can be more self-evident than the fact that the Government cannot infringe the laws of the country. During this controversy the Law Courts decided sometimes, in the case of the *Alexandra*, for example, that there was not evidence enough to justify the seizure or the stoppage of a vessel. But it has to be remembered, that in regard to the *Alabama*, what Mr. Adams asked was not the breaking of English law, but the holding, as it were, of the vessel to bail until the law could be ascertained. There is, however, a much wider question than this, in his views with regard to which Lord Russell seems to have been entirely wrong. The laws of a country are made, first of all, to suit its own people. The people have a right to keep their laws unchanged as long as they please. They are not bound to alter them to suit the pleasure or the convenience of any other nation. All that is clear. But it is equally clear, on the other hand, that they cannot get out of their responsibility to another State by merely saying, "We have such and such laws, and we do not choose to alter them." If the laws permit harm to be done to a foreign State, the people maintaining the laws must either make compensation to the foreign State or they must meet her in war. It is absurd to suppose that our neighbours are to submit to injury on our part merely because our laws do not give us the means of preventing the injury. Mr. Adams put it in the fairest manner to Lord Russell. "This is war." In other words, the American Government might have said: "You can allow this sort of thing to go on if you like; but we must point out to you that it is simply war, and nothing else. You are making war or allowing war to be made on us; you cannot shelter yourselves under an imaginary neutrality. If you choose to keep your laws as they are, very good; but you must take the consequences." The extraordinary mistake which Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell made was the assumption that the existence of certain domestic regulations of ours could be a sufficient

answer to claims made upon us by our neighbours. Suppose we had no Foreign Enlistment Act? Suppose the Confederates were allowed openly to raise armies and equip navies in England, and to fly their flag here and go forth to make war on the United States with the permission of our Government? Would it be enough to say to the United States, "We are very sorry indeed; we do not like to see people making war on you from our territory; but unluckily, we have no law to prevent it; and you must, therefore, only put up with it"? The dullest English sympathiser with the cause of the Southern Confederation would not be taken in by a plea like this, or expect the United States to admit it. Yet the case set up by Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell was really not different in kind. It merely pleaded that although our ports were made the basis, and indeed the only basis, of naval operations against the United States, we could not help it; our laws were not so framed as to give our neighbours any protection. The obvious retort on America's side was, "Then we must protect ourselves; we cannot admit that the condition of your municipal laws entitles you to become with impunity a nuisance and pest to your neighbours."

The position which Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell took up was wisely and properly abandoned by Lord Stanley, now Lord Derby, when the Conservatives came into office. It was then frankly admitted that every State is responsible for the manner in which the working of its municipal laws may affect the interests of its neighbours. We need not, however, anticipate just now a controversy and a settlement yet to come. Lord Russell, it may be remarked, was mistaken in another part of his case. He was able to show that in some way or other the authorities of the United States had failed to prevent the enlistment of British subjects in this country for the armies of the Union. But his mistake was in supposing that this was a practical answer to the complaints made by Mr. Adams. There is some difference between a small grievance and a very great grievance. The grievance to us in the secret enlistment of a few British subjects for

the Northern service was not very serious. The authorities of the United States acknowledged that it was improper, and promised to use all diligence to put a stop to it; and of course, if they had failed to do so, it would be entirely for England to consider what steps she ought to take to obtain a redress of any wrong done to her. But in a practical controversy there was no comparison between the grievances. It is not a reasonable reply to a neighbour who complains that our fierce dog has broken into his house and bitten his children, if we say that his cat has stolen into our kitchen and eaten our cream. It is strange, too, to observe that Lord Russell and the Chief Baron and other authorities constantly dwell on the fact that a neutral may sell arms to either belligerent, and ask triumphantly if arms, why not an armed vessel? If shot and shell, why not a cruiser or a ram? There is at all events one plain reason which would be enough even if there were none other. It is not possible to prove that the shot and shell have done any damage; it is possible to prove that the cruiser has. We cannot follow the rifle or the bullet to its destination; we can follow the *Alabama*. It would be idle to try to prove that a certain lot of gunpowder was discharged against a Northern regiment; but it is easy to prove that the *Alabama* burned American vessels and confiscated American cargoes. The bitterness of the feeling in America was not mitigated, nor the sense of English unfairness made less keen, by the production during the controversy of a despatch sent from England to Washington at the opening of the Crimean War, in which the English Government expressed a confident hope that the authorities of the United States would give orders that no privateer under Russian colours should be equipped or victualled or admitted with its prizes into any of the ports of the United States.

The controversy was carried on for some years. It became mixed up with disputes about Confederate raids from Canada into the States, and later on about Fenian raids from the States into Canada, and questions of fishery right and various other matters of discussion; but the

principal subject of dispute, the only one of real gravity, was that which concerned the cruise of the *Alabama*. Lord Russell at length declined peremptorily to admit that the English Government were in any way responsible for what had been done by the Confederate cruisers, or that England was called on to alter her domestic law to please her neighbours. Mr. Adams therefore dropped the matter for the time, intimating however that it was only put aside for the time. The United States Government had their hands full just then; and in any case could afford to wait. The question would keep. The British Government were glad to be relieved from the discussion and from the necessity of arguing the various points with Mr. Adams, and were under the pleasing impression that they had heard the last of it.

Surveying the diplomatic controversy at this distance of time, one cannot but think that Mr. Adams comes best out of it. No minister representing the interests of his State in a foreign capital could have had a more trying position to sustain and a more difficult part to play. Mr. Adams knew the tone of the society in which he had to move was hostile to his Government and to his cause. It was difficult for him to remain always patient and yet to show that the American Government could not be expected to endure everything. It was not easy to retain always the calm courtesy which his place demanded, which was, indeed, an inheritance in his family of stately public men. He was embarrassed sometimes by the officious efforts, the volunteer intervention of some of his own countrymen, who, knowing nothing of English political life and English social ways, fancied they were making a favourable impression on public opinion here by the tactics of a fall campaign at home. Moreover, it is plain that for a long time Mr. Adams was in much doubt as to the capacity of the military leaders of the North; and he well knew that nothing but military success could rescue the Union from the diplomatic conspiracies which were going on in Europe for the promotion of the Southern cause. Mr. Adams appears to have borne himself all through with judgment, temper, and dignity. Lord Russell does not show to so much advantage. He

is sometimes petulant; he is too often inclined to answer Mr. Adams' grave and momentous remonstrances with retorts founded on allegations against the North which, even if well founded, were of slight comparative importance. When Mr. Adams complains of the *Alabama* sweeping American commerce from the seas, Lord Russell too often replies with some complaint about the enlistment of British subjects for the service of the Union; as if the Confederates making war on the United States from English ports with English ships and crews, were no graver matter of complaint than the story, true or false, of some American agent having enlisted Tim Doolan and Sandy Macsnish to fight for the North. Mr. Seward does not come out of the correspondence well. There is a curious evasiveness in his frequent floods of eloquence which contrasts unpleasantly with Mr. Adams' straightforward and manly style. Mr. Seward writes as if he were under the impression that he could palaver Mr. Adams and Lord Russell and the British public into not believing the evidence of their senses. At the gloomiest hour of the fortunes of the North, Mr. Adams faces the facts, and, confident of the ultimate future, makes no pretence at ignoring the seriousness of the present danger. Mr. Seward seems to think that public attention can be cheated away from a recognition of realities by a display of inappropriate rhetorical fireworks. At a moment when the prospect of the North seemed especially gloomy, and when it was apparent to every human creature that its military affairs had long been in hopelessly bad hands, Mr. Seward writes to inform Mr. Adams that "Our assault upon Richmond is for the moment suspended," and is good enough to add that "no great and striking movements or achievements are occurring, and the Government is rather preparing its energies for renewed operations than continuing to surprise the world by new and brilliant victories." The Northern commanders had, indeed, for some time been surprising the world, but not at all by brilliant victories; and the suggestion that the Northern Government might go on winning perpetual victories if they only wished it, but that they preferred for the present not to dazzle the world too much

with their success, must have fallen rather chillingly on Mr. Adams' ear. Mr. Adams knew only too well that the North must win victories soon, or they might find themselves confronted with a European confederation against them. The Emperor Napoleon was working hard to get England to join with him in recognising the South. Mr. Roebuck had at one time a motion in the House of Commons calling on the English Government to make up their minds to the recognition; and Mr. Adams had explained again and again that such a step would mean war with the Northern States. Mr. Adams was satisfied that the fate of Mr. Roebuck's motion would depend on the military events of a few days. He was right. The motion was never pressed to a division; for during its progress there came at one moment the news that General Grant had taken Vicksburg on the Mississippi, and that General Meade had defeated General Lee at Gettysburg and put an end to all thought of a Southern invasion. This news was at first received with resolute incredulity in London by the advocates and partisans of the South. In some of the clubs there was positive indignation that such things should be even reported. The outburst of wrath was natural. That was the turning point of the war, although not many saw it even then. The South never had a chance after that hour. There was no more said in this country about the recognition of the Southern Confederation, and the Emperor of the French was thenceforward free to follow out his plans as far as he could and alone.

The Emperor Napoleon was for the present confident enough. He was under the impression that he had heard the last of the protests against his Mexican expedition. This expedition was in the beginning a joint undertaking of England, France, and Spain. Its professed object, as set forth in a convention signed in London on October 31, 1861, was, "to demand from the Mexican authorities more efficacious protection for the persons and properties of their (the Allied Sovereigns') subjects, as well as a fulfilment of the obligations contracted towards their Majesties by the Republic of Mexico." Mexico had been for a long time in a very disorganised state. The Constitutional

Government of Benito Juarez had come into power, but the reactionary party were still struggling to regain the upper hand, and a sort of guerilla warfare was actually going on. The Government of Juarez, whatever its defects, gave promise of being stronger and better than that of its predecessors. But it was burthened with responsibility for the debts incurred and the crimes committed by its predecessors; and it entered into an agreement with several foreign states, England among the rest, to make over a certain proportion of the Customs revenues to meet the claims of foreign creditors. This arrangement was not kept, and timely satisfaction was not given for wrongs committed against foreign subjects—wronges for the most part, if not altogether, done by the Government which Juarez had expelled from power, but for which of course he, as the successor to power, was properly responsible. Lord Russell, who had acted with great forbearance towards Mexico up to this time, now agreed to co-operate with France and Spain in exacting reparation from Juarez. But he defined clearly the extent to which the intervention of England would go. England would join in an expedition for the purpose, if necessary, of seizing on Mexican custom-houses, and thus making good the foreign claims. But she would not go a step further. She would have nothing to do with upsetting the Government of Mexico, or imposing any European system on the Mexican people. Accordingly the Second Article of the Convention pledged the contracting parties not to seek for themselves any acquisition of territory or any special advantage, and not to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influence of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose and to constitute freely the form of its government. The Emperor of the French, however, had already made up his mind that he would establish a sort of feudatory monarchy in Mexico. He had long had various schemes and ambitions floating in his mind concerning those parts of America on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, which were once the possessions of France. In his dreamy fantastic way, he had visions of restoring French influence and authority somewhere along the shores of the Gulf; and the outbreak



of the Southern rebellion appeared to give him just the opportunity that he desired. At the time when the Convention was signed the affairs of the Federal States seemed all but hopeless, and for a long time after they gave no gleam of hope for the restoration of the Union. Louis Napoleon was convinced then, and for long after, that the Southern States would succeed in establishing their independence. He seems to have been of Mr. Roebuck's way of thinking, that "the only fear we ought to have is lest the independence of the South should be established without us." He was glad therefore of the chance afforded him by the Mexican Convention, and at the very time when he signed the Convention with the pledge contained in its second article, he had already been making arrangements to found a monarchy in Mexico. If he could have ventured to set up a monarchy with a French prince at its head, he would probably have done so; but this would have been too bold a venture. He, therefore, persuaded the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor of Austria, to accept the crown of the monarchy he proposed to set up in Mexico. The Archduke was a man of pure and noble character, but evidently wanting in strength of mind, and he agreed after some hesitation to accept the offer.

Meanwhile the joint expedition sailed. We sent only a line-of-battle ship, two frigates, and 700 marines. France sent in the first instance about 2500 men, whom she largely reinforced immediately after. Spain had about 6000 men under the command of the late Marshal Prim. The Allies soon began to find that their purposes were incompatible. There was much suspicion about the designs of France, although the French statesmen were every day repudiating in stronger and stronger terms the intentions imputed to them, and which soon proved to be the resolute purposes of the Emperor of the French. Some of the claims set up by France disgusted the other Allies. The Jecker claims were for a long time after as familiar a subject of ridicule as our own Pacifico claims had been. A Swiss house of Jecker & Company had lent the former Government of Mexico 750,000 dollars, and got bonds from that Government, which was on its very last legs, for fifteen

millions of dollars. The Government was immediately afterwards upset, and Juarez came into power. M. Jecker modestly put in his claim for fifteen millions of dollars. Juarez refused to comply with the demand. He offered to pay the 750,000 dollars lent and five per cent. interest, but he declined to pay exactly twenty times the amount of the sum advanced. M. Jecker had by this time become somehow a subject of France, and the French Government took up his claim. It was clear that the Emperor of the French had resolved that there should be war. At last the designs of the French Government became evident to the English and Spanish Plenipotentiaries, and England and Spain withdrew from the Convention. England certainly ought never to have entered into it. But as she had been drawn in, the best thing then was for her to get out of it as decently and as quickly as she could. Nothing in the enterprise became her like to the leaving of it.

The Emperor of the French "walked his own wild road, whither that led him." He overran a certain portion of Mexico with his troops. He captured Puebla after a long and desperate resistance; he occupied the capital, and he set up the Mexican Empire with Maximilian as Emperor. French troops remained to protect the new Empire. Against all this the United States Government protested from time to time. They disclaimed any intention to prevent the Mexican people from establishing an empire if they thought fit; but they pointed out that grave inconveniences must arise if a foreign Power like France persisted in occupying with her troops any part of the American continent. The Monroe doctrine, which by the way was the invention of George Canning and not of President Monroe, does not forbid the establishing of a monarchy on the American continent, but only the intervention of a European Power to set up such a system, or any system opposed to liberty there. However, the Emperor Napoleon cared nothing just then about the Monroe doctrine, complacently satisfied that the United States were going to pieces, and that the Southern Confederacy would be his friend and ally. He received

the protests of the American Government with unveiled indifference. At last the tide in American affairs turned. The Confederacy crumbled away—Richmond was taken; Lee surrendered; Jefferson Davis was a prisoner. Then the United States returned to the Mexican Question, and the American Government informed Louis Napoleon that it would be inconvenient, gravely inconvenient, if he were not to withdraw his soldiers from Mexico. A significant movement of American troops, under a renowned General, then flushed with success, was made in the direction of the Mexican frontier. There was nothing for Louis Napoleon but to withdraw. Up to the last he had been rocked in the vainest hopes. Long after the end had become patent to every other eye, he assured an English member of Parliament that he looked upon the Mexican Empire as the greatest creation of his reign.

The Mexican Empire lasted two months and a week after the last of the French troops had been withdrawn. Maximilian endeavoured to raise an army of his own, and to defend himself against the daily increasing strength of Juarez. He showed all the courage which might have been expected from his race, and from his own previous history. But in an evil hour for himself, and yielding, it is stated, to the persuasion of a French officer, he had issued a decree that all who resisted his authority in arms should be shot. By virtue of this monstrous ordinance, Mexican officers of the regular army, taken prisoners while resisting, as they were bound to do, the invasion of a European prince, were shot like brigands. The Mexican general, Ortega, was one of those thus shamefully done to death. When Juarez conquered, and Maximilian, in his turn, was made a prisoner, he was tried by court-martial, condemned, and shot. His death created a profound sensation in Europe. He had in all his previous career won respect everywhere, and even in the Mexican scheme he was universally regarded as a noble victim who had been deluded to his doom. The conduct of Juarez in thus having him put to death raised a cry of horror from all Europe; but it must be allowed that, by the fatal decree which he had issued, the unfortunate Maximilian had left himself liable to a stern retaliation.

There was cold truth in the remark made at the time, that if he had been only General and not Archduke Maximilian, his fate would not have aroused so much surprise or anger.

The French Empire never recovered the shock of this Mexican failure. It was chiefly in the hope of regaining his lost prestige that the Emperor tried to show himself a strong man in German affairs. More than three years before the fall of Maximilian, the present writer, in commenting on Louis Napoleon's scheme, ventured to predict that Mexico would prove the Moscow of the Second Empire. Time has not shown that the prediction was rash. The French Empire outlived the Mexican Empire by three years and a few weeks. From the entering of Moscow to the arrival at St. Helena the interval was three years and one month.

We need not follow any further the history of the American Civil War. The restoration of the Union, the assassination of President Lincoln, and the emancipation of the coloured race from all the disqualifications, as well as all the bondage, of the slave system, belong to American and not to English history. But the *Alabama* dispute led to consequences which are especially important to England, and which shall be described in their due time. Meanwhile, it is necessary, for the proper appreciation of the final terms of settlement, that we should see exactly how the dispute arose, and what was the condition of public feeling in this country at the time when it grew into serious proportions. If the final settlement was felt to be humiliating in England, it must be owned that those who are commonly called the governing classes had themselves very much to blame. Their conviction that the Civil War must lead to the disruption of the Union was at the bottom of much of the indifference and apathy which for a long time was shown by English officials in regard to the remonstrances of the United States. The impression that we might do as we liked with the North was made only too obvious. The United States must, indeed, then have felt that they were receiving a warning that to be weak is to be miserable. It is not surprising if they believed at that time

that England was disposed to adopt Sir Giles Overreach's way of thinking—

We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen  
Past hope sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand  
To lift them up, but rather set our feet  
Upon their heads to press them to the bottom.

It is not certain that the supporters of the Southern side at any time actually outnumbered the champions of the North and of the Union ; but they seemed for the greater part of the war's duration to have the influence of the country mainly with them. A superficial observer might have been excused at one time if he said that England as a whole was on the side of the secession. This would have been a very inaccurate statement of the case ; but the inaccuracy would have been excusable, and even natural. The vast majority of what are called the governing classes were on the side of the South. By far the greater number of the aristocracy, of the official world, of members of Parliament, of military and naval men, were for the South. London club life was virtually all Southern. The most powerful papers in London, and the most popular papers as well, were open partisans of the Southern Confederation. In London, to be on the side of the Union was at one time to be eccentric, to be un-English, to be Yankee. On the other hand, most of the democratic towns of the midland and of the north were mainly in favour of the Union. The artisans everywhere were on the same side. This was made strikingly manifest in Lancashire. The supply of cotton from America nearly ceased in consequence of the war, and the greatest distress prevailed in that county. The "cotton famine," called by no exaggerated name, set in. All that private benevolence could do, all that legislation, enabling money to be borrowed for public works to give employment, could do, was for a time hardly able to contend against the distress. Yet the Lancashire operatives were among the sturdiest of those who stood out against any proposal to break the blockade or to recognise the South. Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, and the Manchester School generally, or at least all that were left of them, were for the North. A small

but very influential number of thoughtful men, Mr. John Stuart Mill at their head, were faithful to their principles, and stood firmly by the cause of the Union. But the voice of London, that is the voice of what is called society, and of the metropolitan shopkeeping classes who draw their living from society—all this was for the South. It was not a question of Liberal and Tory. The Tories, on the whole, were more discreet than the Liberals. It was not from the Conservative benches of the House of Commons that the bitterest and least excusable denunciations of the Northern cause and of the American Republic were heard. It was a Liberal who declared with exultation that "the republican bubble" had burst. It was a Liberal—Mr. Roebuck—who was most clamorous for English intervention to help the South. It was Lord Russell who described the struggle as one in which the North was striving for empire and the South for independence. It was Mr. Gladstone who said that the President of the Southern Confederation—Mr. Jefferson Davis—had made an army, had made a navy, and, more than that, had made a nation. But it is to be remarked that among the Liberals, even of the official class, were to be seen some of the staunchest advocates of the Northern cause. The Duke of Argyll championed the cause from warm sympathy; Sir George Lewis from cool philosophy. Mr. Charles Villiers and Mr. Milner Gibson were frankly and steadily on the side of the North. The Conservative leaders on the whole behaved with great discretion. Mr. Adams wrote, in July 1863, that "the Opposition leaders are generally disinclined to any demonstrations whatever. Several of them in reality rather sympathise with us. But the body of their party continue animated by the same feelings to America which brought on the Revolution, and which drove us into the war of 1812." Lord Derby, indeed, expressed his conviction that the Union never could be restored, but Lord Palmerston had done the same. Mr. Disraeli abstained from saying anything that could offend any Northerner, and gave no indication of partisanship on either side. Lord Stanley always spoke like a fair and reasonable man, who understood thoroughly

what he was talking about. In this he was, unfortunately, somewhat peculiar among the class to which he belonged. Not many of them appeared precisely to know what they were talking about. They took their opinions for the most part from the *Times* and from the talk of the clubs. The talk of the clubs was that the Southerners were all gentlemen and very nice fellows, who were sure to win; and that the Northerners were low, trading, shop-keeping fellows who did not know how to fight, were very cowardly, and were certain to be defeated. There was a theory that the Northerners really rather liked slavery and would have it if they could, and that a negro slave in the South was much better off than a free negro in the Northern States. The geography of the question was not very clearly understood in the clubs. Those who endeavoured to show that it was not easy to find a convenient dividing line for two federations on the North American continent, were commonly answered that the Mississippi formed exactly the suitable frontier. It was an article of faith with some of those who then most eagerly discussed the question in London, that the Mississippi flowed east and west, and separated neatly the seceding States from the States of the North. The *Times* was the natural instructor of what is called society in London, and the *Times* was, unfortunately, very badly informed all through the war. After the failure of General Lee's attempt to carry invasion into the North, and the simultaneous capture of Vicksburg by General Grant, any one, it might have been thought, who was capable of forming an opinion at all, must have seen that the flood-tide of the rebellion had been reached and was over; that the South would have to stand on the defensive from that hour, and that the overcoming of its defence, considering the comparative resources of the belligerents, was only a question of time. Yet for a whole year or more the London public were still assured that the Confederates were sweeping from victory to victory; that wherever they seemed even to undergo a check, that was only a part of their superior policy, which would presently vindicate itself in greater victory; that the North was staggering, crippled and

exhausted ; and that the only doubt was whether General Lee would not at once march for Washington and establish the Southern Government there. Almost to the very hour when the South, its brave and brilliant defence all over, had to confess defeat and yield its broken sword to the conquerors, the London public were still invited to believe that Mr. Davis was floating on the full flood of success. While the hearts of all in Richmond were filled with despair, and the final surrender was accounted there a question of days, the Southern sympathisers in London were complacently bidden to look out for the full triumph and the assured independence of the Southern Confederation. On the last day of December 1864, the *Times* complained that "Mr. Seward and other teachers or flatterers of the multitude still affect to anticipate the early restoration of the Union"—and in three months from that date the rebellion was over. Those who read and believed in such instruction—and up to the very last their name was legion—must surely have been bewildered when the news came of the capture of Richmond and the surrender of Lee. They might well have thought that only some miraculous intervention of a malignant fate could thus all at once have converted victory into defeat, and turned the broken worthless levies of Grant and Sherman into armies of conquerors.

In the end the Southern population were as bitter against us as the North. The Southern States fancied themselves deceived. They too had mistaken the unthinking utterances of what is called society in England for the expression of English statesmanship and public feeling. It is proper to assert distinctly that at no time had the English Government any thought of acting on the suggestion of the Emperor of the French and recognising the South. Lord Palmerston would not hear of it, nor would Lord Russell. What might have come to pass if the Southern successes had continued a year longer it would be idle now to conjecture ; but up to the turning-point our statesmen had not changed, and after the turning-point change was out of the question. There is nothing to blame in the conduct of the English Government throughout all



this trying time, except as regards the manner in which they dismissed the remonstrances about the building of the privateers. But it is not likely that impartial history will acquit them of the charge of having been encouraged in their indifference by the common conviction that the Union was about to be broken up, and that the North was no longer a formidable power.

## CHAPTER XLV

### PALMERSTON'S LAST VICTORY

DURING the later months of his life the Prince Consort had been busy in preparing for another great International Exhibition to be held in London. It was arranged that this Exhibition should open on May 1, 1862; and although the sudden death of the Prince Consort greatly interfered with the prospects of the undertaking, it was not thought right that there should be any postponement of the opening. The Exhibition building was erected in South Kensington, according to a design by Captain Fowke. It certainly was not a beautiful structure. None of the novel charm which attached to the bright exterior of the Crystal Palace could be found in the South Kensington building. It was a huge and solid erection of brick, with two enormous domes, each in shape so strikingly like the famous crinoline petticoat of the period that people amused themselves by suggesting that the principal idea of the architect was to perpetuate for posterity the shape and structure of the Empress Eugenie's invention. The Fine Arts department of the Exhibition was a splendid collection of pictures and statues. The display of products of all kinds from the Colonies was rich, and was a novelty, for the colonists contributed little indeed to the Exhibition of 1851; and the intervening eleven years had been a period of immense colonial advance. But the public did not enter with much heart into the enterprise of 1862. No one felt any longer any of the hopes which floated dreamily and gracefully round the

scheme of 1851. There was no talk or thought of a reign of peace any more. The Civil War was raging in America. The Continent of Europe was trembling all over with the spasms of war just done, and the premonitory symptoms of war to come. The Exhibition of 1862 had to rely upon its intrinsic merits, like any ordinary show or any public market. Poetry and prophecy had nothing to say to it.

England was left for some time to an almost absolute inactivity. As regards measures of political legislation, after the failure of the Reform Bill, it was quite understood, as we have already said, that there was to be no more of Reform while Lord Palmerston lived. At one of his elections for Tiverton, Lord Palmerston was attacked by a familiar antagonist, a sturdy Radical butcher, and asked to explain why he did not bring in another Reform Bill. The answer was characteristic. "Why do we not bring in another Reform Bill? Because we are not geese." Lord Palmerston was heartily glad to be rid of schemes in which he had neither belief nor sympathy; and his absence of political foresight in home affairs made him satisfied that the whole question of Reform was quietly shelved for another generation. It is not, perhaps, surprising that a busy statesman, whose intellect was mostly exercised on questions of foreign policy, should have come to this conclusion, when cool critics on public affairs were ready to adopt with complacency a similar faith. The *Quarterly Review* said, in 1863, "Reform is no longer talked of now. Mr. Bright has almost ceased to excite antipathy." "Our statesmen," it went on to say with portentous gravity, "have awakened to the fact that the imagined Reform agitation was nothing but an intrigue among themselves, and that the nation was far too sensible to desire any further approximation to the government of the multitude." Lord Palmerston was free to indulge in his taste for foreign politics.

Between Palmerston and the Radical party in England there was a growing coldness. He had not only thrown over Reform himself, but he had apparently induced most of his colleagues to accept the understanding that nothing more was to be said about it. He had gone in for a policy of large expenditure for the purpose of securing the country

against the possibilities of invasion. He had lent himself openly to the propagation of what his adversaries called, not very unreasonably, the scare that was got up about another Napoleonic invasion. When drawn into argument by Mr. Cobden on the subject, Lord Palmerston had betrayed a warmth of manner that was almost offensive, and had spoken of the commercial treaty with France as if it were a thing rather ridiculous than otherwise. He was unsparing whenever he had a chance in his ridicule of the ballot. He had very little sympathy with the grievances of the Nonconformists, some of them even still real and substantial enough. He took no manner of interest in anything proposed for the political benefit of Ireland. Although an Irish landlord, an Irish peer, and occasionally speaking of himself, in a half jocular way as an Irishman, he could not be brought even to affect any sympathy with any of the complaints made by the representatives of that country. He scoffed at all proposals about tenant-right. "Tenant-right," he once said, "is landlord's wrong"; and he was cheered for saying this by the landlords on both sides of the House of Commons; and he evidently thought he had settled the question. He was indeed impatient of all "views"; and he regarded what is called philosophic statesmanship with absolute contempt. The truth is that Palmerston ceased to be a statesman the moment he came to deal with domestic interests. When actually in the Home Office, and compelled to turn his attention to the business of that department, he proved a very efficient administrator, because of his shrewdness and his energy. But as a rule he had not much to do with English political affairs, and he knew little or nothing of them. He was even childishly ignorant of many things which any ordinary public man is supposed to know. He was at home in foreign—that is, in Continental politics; for he had hardly any knowledge of American affairs, and almost up to the moment of the fall of Richmond was confident that the Union never could be restored, and that separation was the easy and natural way of settling all the dispute. He gave a pension to an absurd and obscure writer of doggerel, and when a question was raised about this singular piece of

patronage in the House of Commons, it turned out that Lord Palmerston knew nothing about the man, but had got it into his head somehow that he was a poet of the class of Burns. When he read anything except despatches he read scientific treatises, for he had a keen interest in some branches of science; but he cared little for modern English literature. The world in which he delighted to mingle talked of Continental politics generally, and a great knowledge of English domestic affairs would have been thrown away there. Naturally, therefore, when Lord Palmerston had nothing particular to do in foreign affairs, and had to turn his attention to England, he relished the idea of fortifying her against foreign foes. This was foreign politics seen from another point of view; it had far more interest for him than reform or tenant-right.

There were, however, some evidences of a certain difference of opinion between Lord Palmerston and some of his colleagues, as well as between him and the Radical party. His constant activity in foreign politics pleased some of his Cabinet as little as it pleased the advanced Liberals. His vast fortification schemes and his willingness to spend money on any project that tended towards war, or, what seemed much the same thing, on any elaborate preparation against problematical war, was not congenial with the temperament and the judgment of some members of his administration. Lord Palmerston acted sincerely on the opinion which he expressed in a short letter to Mr. Cobden, that "man is a fighting and quarrelling animal." Assuming it to be the nature of man to fight and quarrel, he could see no better business for English statesmanship than to keep this country always in a condition to resist a possible attack from somebody. He differed almost radically on this point from two at least of his more important colleagues, Mr. Gladstone and Sir George Cornwall Lewis. Mr. Evelyn Ashley, in his "Life of Lord Palmerston," has published some interesting letters that passed between Palmerston and these statesmen on this general subject. Palmerston wrote to Sir George Lewis on November 22, 1860, arguing against something Lewis had said, and which Palmerston hopes "was only a conversa-

tional paradox, and not a deliberately adopted theory." This was a dissent on the part of Lewis from the maxim, that in statesmanship prevention is better than cure. Each had clearly in his mind the prevention which would take security against the perils of war; Lord Palmerston therefore goes on at once in his letter to show that in many cases the timely adoption of spirited measures by an English Government would have actually prevented war. Lewis argues that "if an evil is certain and proximate, and can be averted by diplomacy, then undoubtedly prevention is better than cure"; but that "if the evil is remote and uncertain, then I think it better not to resort to preventive measures, which insure a proximate and certain mischief." The purpose of the discussion is made more clear in Lewis's concluding sentence: "It seems to me that our foreign relations are on too vast a scale to render it wise for us to insure systematically against all risks; and if we do not insure systematically we do nothing." On April 29, 1862, Lord Palmerston writes to Mr. Gladstone about a speech that Mr. Gladstone had just been making in Manchester, and in which, as Lord Palmerston puts it, Mr. Gladstone seems "to make it a reproach to the nation at large that it has forced, as you say it has, on the Parliament and the Government the high amount of expenditure which we have at present to provide for." Palmerston does not "quite agree" with Mr. Gladstone "as to the fact"; "but admitting it to be as you state, it seems to me to be rather a proof of the superior sagacity of the nation than a subject for reproach." Lord Palmerston goes on to argue that the country, so far from having, as Cobden had accused it of doing, "rushed headlong into extravagance under the influence of panic," had simply awakened from a lethargy, got rid of "an apathetic blindness on the part of the governed and the governors as to the defensive means of the country compared with the offensive means acquired and acquiring by other Powers." "We have on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation upon England. It is natural that this should be so. They are

eminently vain, and their passion is glory in war. They cannot forget or forgive Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsula, Waterloo, and St. Helena. . . . Well then at the head of this neighbouring nation, who would like nothing so well as a retaliatory blow upon England, we see an able, active, wary, council-keeping but ever-planning sovereign; and we see this sovereign organising an army which, including his reserve, is more than six times greater in amount than the whole of our regular forces in our two islands, and at the same time labouring hard to create a navy equal, if not superior, to ours. Give him a cause of quarrel, which any foreign Power may at any time invent or create, if so minded; give him the command of the Channel, which permanent or accidental naval superiority might afford him, and then calculate if you can—for it would pass my reckoning power to do so—the disastrous consequences to the British nation which a landing of an army of from one to two hundred thousand men would bring with it. Surely even a large yearly expenditure for army and navy is an economical insurance against such a catastrophe.” The reader will perhaps be reminded of one of the most effective arguments of Demosthenes. Consider, he says, what even a few days of the occupation of the country by a foreign enemy would mean, and then say whether as a mere matter of economy it would not be better to spend a good deal of the resources we have in striving to avert such a calamity. There is a great difference in the purpose and the application of the two arguments. Demosthenes puts the case in a way that is from its point of view perfect. He is speaking of a danger that lies at the gates; of an enemy who must be encountered one way or another; and he is pleading for instant and offensive war. It is a very different thing to argue for enormous expenditure on the ground that somebody who is now professing the most peaceful intentions may possibly one day become your enemy, and try to attack you. In such a case, the first thing to be considered is whether the danger is real and likely to be imminent, or whether it is merely speculative. Even against speculative dangers a wise people will always take precautions; but it is no part of wisdom to spend in

guarding against such perils as much as would be needed to enable us actually to speak with the enemy at the gate. It is a question of proportion and comparison. As Sir George Lewis argues, it is not possible for a nation like England to secure herself against all speculative dangers. France might invade us from Boulogne or Cherbourg, no doubt. But the United States might at the same time assail us in Canada. Russia might attack, as she once thought of doing, our Australian possessions, or make an onslaught upon us in Asia. Germany might be in alliance with Russia; Austria might at the same time be in alliance with France. These are all possibilities; they might all come to pass at one and the same time. But how could any State keep fleets and armies capable of insuring her against serious peril from such a combination? It would be better to make up our minds to wait until the assault really threatened, and then fight it out the best way we could. Lord Palmerston seemed to forget that in the campaign against Russia it did not prove easy for France to send out an army very much smaller than his "one or two hundred thousand men"; and that Louis Napoleon was glad to finish up prematurely his campaign in Lombardy, even though he had won in every battle. He had also made the mistake of assuming that all these military and naval insurances must insure. If he had lived to 1870 he would have seen that a Sovereign may engage himself for years in the preparing of an immense armament, that it may be the armament of a people "eminently vain," and whose "passion is glory in war"; and yet that the armament may turn out a vast failure, and may prove at the hour of need a defence like Rodomonte's bridge in Ariosto, which only conducts its owner to ignominious upset and fall. All the resources of France were strained for years, and by one who could do as he pleased, for the single purpose of creating a great overmastering army; and when the time came to test the army, it proved to be little better than what Prince Bismarck called "a crowd of fighting persons." This is surely a matter to be taken account of when we are thinking of going to vast annual expense for the purpose of maintaining a great armament. We may go to all the expense,

and yet not have the armament when we fancy we have need for it. That, Lord Palmerston would doubtless have said, is a risk we must run. Mr. Gladstone and Sir George Lewis would no doubt have thought problematic invasion a risk more safe to run. That had been the view of Sir Robert Peel.

Whatever may be thought of the merits of the argument on either side—and the decision will be made more often probably by temperament than by reasoning—the controversy will serve to illustrate the sort of difference that was gradually growing up between Lord Palmerston and some of his own colleagues. Lord Palmerston had of late fallen again into a policy of suspicion and distrust as regards France. We are convinced that he was perfectly sincere ; and, as has been said already in these pages, we do not think there was any inconsistency in his conduct. He had for a long time believed in the good faith of the Emperor of the French ; but the policy of the Lombardy campaign, and the consequent annexation of Savoy and Nice, had come on him as a complete surprise, and when he found that his friend Louis Napoleon could keep such secrets from him, he possibly came to the conclusion that he could keep others still more important. Lord Palmerston made England his idol. He loved her in a Pagan way. He did not much care for abstract justice where she was concerned. He was unscrupulous where he believed her interests were to be guarded. Nor had he any other than a purely Pagan view of her interests. It did not seem to have occurred to him that England's truest interest would be to do justice to herself and to other States ; to be what Voltaire's Brahmin boasts of being, a good parent and a faithful friend, maintaining well her own children and endeavouring for peace among her neighbours. Palmerston's idea was that England should hold the commanding place among European States, and that none should even seem to be in a position to do her scathe.

Lord Palmerston's taste for foreign affairs had now ample means of gratification. England had some small troubles of her own to deal with. A serious insurrection sprang up in New Zealand. The tribe of the Waikatos, living near Auckland in the Northern Island, began a movement against the colonists, and this became before long a



general rebellion of the Maori natives. The Maoris are a remarkably intelligent race, and are skilful in war as well as in peace. Not long before this the Governor of the colony, Sir George Grey, had written in the warmest praise of their industrial capabilities and their longing for mental improvement. They had a certain literary art among them ; they could all, or nearly all, read and write ; many of them were eloquent and could display considerable diplomatic skill. They fought so well in this instance that the British troops actually suffered a somewhat serious repulse in endeavouring to take one of the Maori palisado-fortified villages. In the end, however, they were of course defeated. The quarrel was a survival of a long-standing dispute between the colonists and the natives about land. It was, in fact, the old story : the colonists eager to increase their stock of land, and the natives jealous to guard their quickly vanishing possession. The events led to grave discussion in Parliament. The Legislature of New Zealand passed enactments confiscating some nine million acres of the native lands and giving the Colonial Government something like absolute and arbitrary power of arrest and imprisonment. The Government at home proposed to help the colonists by a guarantee to raise a loan of one million to cover the expenses of the war, or the colonial share of them, and this proposal was keenly discussed in the House of Commons. It was on this occasion that Mr. Roebuck laid down a philosophical theory which gave a good deal of offence to sensitive people ; the theory that where "the brown man" and the white meet, the brown man is destined to disappear. The doctrine is questionable enough, even as a theory. No doubt the brown man is destined to disappear if the white man, with his better weapons and greater cleverness and resources, makes it his business to extirpate him ; and it was justly pointed out that whatever Mr. Roebuck may have personally meant by his theory, its inculcation at such a moment could only tend to strengthen this idea in the minds of some colonists who were already only too willing to entertain it. But until the brown man has had full fair play somewhere alongside of the white man, it is rash to come to any distinct conclusions as to his ultimate destiny.

Mr. Roebuck always loved theories neatly cut and sharpened. He gave them out with a precision which lent them an appearance of power and authority; they seemed to argue a mind that had "swallowed formulas," as Mr. Carlyle puts it, and was above the cant of humanitarianism. But such theories are more satisfactorily broached and discussed in scientific societies than in parliamentary debate. The ultimate destiny of the brown man did not particularly help the House of Commons to any conclusions concerning the New Zealand insurrection, because even Mr. Roebuck did not put forward his theory as an argument to prove that in every controversy we were bound to take the side of the white man and assist him in his predestined business of extinguishing his brown rival. The Government passed their Guarantee Bill, not without many a protest from both sides of the House that colonists who readily engaged in quarrels with natives must some time or other be prepared to bear the expenses entailed by their own policy.

Trouble, too, arose on the Gold Coast of Africa. Some slaves of the King of Ashantee had taken refuge in British territory; the Governor of Cape Coast Colony would not give them up; and in the spring of 1863 the King made threatening demonstrations, invading the territories of neighbouring chiefs, destroying many of their villages, and approaching within forty miles of our frontier. The Governor, assuming that the settlement was about to be invaded by the Ashantees, took it upon him to anticipate the movement by sending an expedition into the territory of the King. He ordered troops to be moved for the purpose; the season was badly chosen; the climate was pestilential; even the black troops from the West Indies could not endure it and began to die like flies. The ill-advised undertaking had to be given up; and the Government at home only escaped a vote of censure by a narrow majority of seven: 226 members supported Sir John Hay's resolution declaring that the movement was rash and impolitic, and 233 sustained the action of the Government. Much discussion, too, was aroused by occurrences in Japan. A British subject, Mr. Richardson, was murdered in the English settlement of Japan and on an open road made free to

Englishmen by treaty. This was in September 1862. The murder was committed by some of the followers of Prince Satsuma, one of the powerful feudal princes, who then practically divided the authority of Japan with the regular Government. Reparation was demanded both from the Japanese Government and from Prince Satsuma; the Government paid the sum demanded of them, £100,000, and made an apology. Prince Satsuma was called on to pay £25,000, and to see that the murderers were brought to punishment, the crime having been committed within his jurisdiction. Satsuma did nothing, and in 1863 Colonel Neale, the English *Chargé d'Affaires* in Japan, called upon Admiral Kuper to go with the English fleet to Kagosima, Satsuma's capital, and demand satisfaction. Admiral Kuper entered the bay on August 11, 1863, and after waiting for a day or two proceeded to seize on some steamers. The Kagosima Forts opened fire on him, and he then bombarded the town and laid the greater portion of it in ashes. The town, it seemed, was built for the most part of wood; it caught fire in the bombardment and was destroyed. Fortunately the non-combatant inhabitants, the women and children, had had time to get out of Kagosima, and the destruction of life was not great. The whole transaction was severely condemned by many Englishmen who did not belong to the ranks of those professed philanthropists whom it is sometimes the fashion to denounce in England as if humanity and patriotism were irreconcilable qualities, and as if a true Englishman ought to have no consideration for the sufferings and the blood of Japanese and Maoris and people of that sort. The House of Commons, however, sustained the Government by a large majority. The Government, it should be said, did not profess to justify the destruction of Kagosima. Their case was that Admiral Kuper had to do something; that there was nothing he could very well do when he had been fired upon but to bombard the town; and that the burning of the town was an accident of the conflict for which neither he nor they could be held responsible. Satsuma finally submitted and paid the money, and promised justice. But there were more murders and more bombardings yet before we came

to anything like an abiding settlement with Japan; and Japan itself was not far off a Revolution, the most sudden, organic, and to all appearance complete that has ever yet been seen in the history of nations.

In the meantime, however, our Government became involved in liabilities more perilous than any disputes in eastern or southern islands could bring on them. An insurrection of a very serious kind broke out in Poland. It was provoked by the Strafford-like thoroughness of the policy adopted by the Russian authorities. It was well known to the Russian Government that a secret political agitation was going on in Poland, and it was determined to anticipate matters and choke off the patriotic movement by taking advantage of the periodical conscription to press into the military ranks all the young men in the cities who could by any possibility be supposed to have any sympathy with it. The attempt to execute this resolve was the occasion for the outbreak of an insurrection which at one time showed something like a claim to success. The young men who could escape fled to the woods, and there formed themselves into armed bands, which gave the Russians great trouble. The rebels could disperse and come together with such ease and rapidity that it was very difficult indeed to get any real advantage over them. The frontier of Austrian-Poland was very near, and the insurgents could cross it, escape from the Russian troops, and recross it when they pleased to resume their harassing operations. Austria was not by any means so unfriendly to the Polish patriots as both Russia and Prussia were. Austria had come unwillingly into the scheme for the partition of Poland, and had got little profit by it; and it was well understood that if the other Powers concerned could see their way to the restoration of Polish nationality, Austria, for her part, would make no objection. The insurgents counted with some confidence on the passive attitude of the Austrian authorities, and the positive sympathy of many officers and soldiers in the Austrian army. They converted the Austrian frontier for a while into a military basis of operations against Russia. To some extent the same thing was attempted on the Prussian frontier, too; but Prussia was still very much

under the dominion of Russia, and was prevailed upon or coerced to execute an odious convention with Russia, by virtue of which the Russian troops were allowed to follow Polish insurgents into Prussian territory. This convention created a strong feeling against Prussia through the whole of Western Europe, and for a while made her much more an object of general dislike than even Russia herself.

It was plain from the first that the Poles could not under the most favourable circumstances hold out long against Russia by virtue of their own strength. It was evident that wherever the insurrection could be got into a corner Russia could crush it with ease. Nevertheless, the plans of the Poles were not so imprudent as they seemed. On the contrary, they had a certain chance of success. The idea, whether clearly and definitely expressed or not, was to keep the insurrection up, by any means and at any risk, until some of the great European Powers should be induced to interfere. The insurrection was a great drama ; a piece of deliberate stage-play. We do not say this in any spirit of disparagement ; the stage-play was got up by patriots with a true and noble purpose, and it was the only statesmanlike policy left to the Poles. Let us keep it up long enough—such was the conviction of the Polish leaders—and Western Europe must intervene. Despite the lesson of subsequent events, the Poles were well justified in their political calculations. Their hopes were at one time on the very eve of being realised. The Emperor Napoleon was eager to move to their aid, and Lord Russell was hardly less eager.

The Polish cause was very popular in England. It had been the political first love of many a man, who now felt his youthful ardour glow again as he read of the gallant struggle made in the forests of Poland. Russia was hated ; Prussia was now hated even more. There was no question of party feeling about the sympathy with Poland. There were about as many Conservatives as Radicals who were ready to favour the idea of some effort being made in her behalf. Lord Ellenborough spoke up for Poland in the House of Lords with poetic and impassioned eloquence. Lord Shaftesbury from the opposite benches denounced

the conduct of Russia. The Irish Catholic was as ardent for Polish liberty as the London artisan. Among its most conspicuous and energetic advocates in England were Mr. Pope Hennessy, a Catholic and Irish member of Parliament; and Mr. Edmund Beales, the leader of a great Radical organisation in London. The question was raised in Parliament by Mr. Hennessy, and aroused much sympathy there. Great public meetings were held, at which Russia was denounced and Poland advocated, not merely by popular orators, but by men of high rank and grave responsibility. War was not openly called for at those meetings, or in the House of Commons; but it was urged that England, as one of the Powers which had signed the Treaty of Vienna, should join with other States in summoning Russia to recognise the rights, such as they were, which had been secured to Poland by virtue of that treaty. In France the greatest enthusiasm prevailed for the cause of Poland. The eloquent pen of Montalembert pleaded for the "nation in mourning." Prince Napoleon spoke with singular eloquence and impressiveness in the French Senate on the justice and the necessity of intervention. The same cause was pleaded by Count Walewski, himself the son of a Polish lady. The Emperor Napoleon required little pressing. He was ready for intervention if he could get England to join him. Lord Russell went so far as to draw up and despatch to Russia, in concert with France and Austria, a note on the subject of Poland. It urged on the attention of the Russian Government six points, as the outline of a system of pacification for Poland. These were:—a complete amnesty; a national representation; a distinct national administration of Poles for the kingdom of Poland; full liberty of conscience, with the repeal of all the restrictions imposed on Catholic worship; the recognition of the Polish language as official; the establishment of a regular system of recruiting. There was an almost universal impression at one moment that in the event of Russia declining to accept these recommendations, England, Austria, and France would make war to compel her. There was hardly any party in England absolutely opposed to the idea of intervention, except the Manchester School

of Radicals. Some of these were consistently opposed to intervention in any foreign cause whatever. Others had an added impression that Poland had managed her national affairs very badly when she had a chance of managing them for herself, and that therefore there was little use in trying to set her on her feet again. Such opposition would, however, have counted for even less than it did at the time of the Crimean War, if the Government had resolved on going in with France and striking a blow for Poland.

Looking back now calmly on the events of that day and those which followed them, it does not seem that such a policy would have been unwise. There was much in the claims of Poland which deserved the sympathy of every lover of liberty and believer in the development of civilisation. If this were the time or place for such a discussion, it would not be difficult to show that the faults found with Poland's old system of government had nothing to do with the condition of the present; and that a new Poland would no more be likely to fall into the errors of the past, than a new Irish Parliament would be likely to refuse the right of representation to Catholics. There would assuredly have been a distinct advantage to the stability of European affairs in the resuscitation of Poland as a distinct and independent part of the Russian State system, even if she were not to be a wholly independent nation once again. This probably could not have been done without war; but it seems more than merely probable that that war would have averted the necessity for many other wars which have since been fought out with less profitable result to European stability. Whether the English alarms about the aggressive designs of Russia be founded or unfounded, the legislative independence of Poland would have made it superfluous to take much thought concerning them. The new Poland would undoubtedly have been a State with representative institutions; and set in the midst of Russia and of Prussia, her example could hardly have been without a contagious influence of a very salutary kind on each.

It soon became known, however, that there was to be no intervention. Lord Palmerston put a stop to the whole idea. It was not that he sympathised with Russia. On

the contrary, he wrote a letter to Baron Brunow, the Russian Ambassador, on February 4, 1863, in which he bluntly told him that he regarded the Polish insurrection as the just punishment inflicted by Heaven on Russia for Russia's having done so much to stir up revolution in the dominions of some of her neighbours. But Lord Palmerston had by this time grown into as profound a distrust of the Emperor Napoleon as any representative of the social and democratic Republic could possibly entertain. He was convinced that the Emperor was stirring in the matter chiefly with the hope of getting an opportunity of establishing himself in the Rhine provinces of Prussia, on the pretext of compelling Prussia to remain neutral in the struggle, or of punishing her if she took the side of Russia. Probably Lord Palmerston was mistaken in this instance. It is not likely that Louis Napoleon ever cared for any war project or annexation scheme except with the view of making his dynasty popular in France; and he may well have thought that the emancipation of Poland would gain him popularity enough to enable him to dispense with other contrivances for the remainder of his reign. However that may be, Lord Palmerston was firm. He described a proposal of the Emperor for an identical note to be addressed to Prussia on the subject of the convention with Russia as a trap laid for England to fall into; and he would have nothing to do with it. After a while it became known that England had decided not to join in any project for armed intervention; and from that moment Russia became merely contemptuous. The Emperor of the French would not and could not take action single-handed; and Prince Gortschakoff politely told Lord Russell that England had really better mind her own business and not encourage movements in Poland which were simply the work of "cosmopolitan revolution." Lord Russell had spoken of the responsibility which the Emperor of Russia was incurring; and Prince Gortschakoff drily replied that the Emperor knew all about that and was quite prepared to accept any responsibility. It used to be said at the time that Prince Gortschakoff gently intimated in diplomatic conversation that if the English Government were inclined



to occupy themselves in redressing the grievances of injured nationalities they would find in Ireland a legitimate and sufficient object for the exercise of their reforming energies. It is certain that England received a snub, and that Prince Gortschakoff intended his reply to be thus accepted by England and thus interpreted by Europe.

After this Austria found it necessary to secure her frontier line more carefully and not allow it to be made any longer a basis of operations against Russia. The insurrection was flung wholly on its own resources. It was kept up gallantly and desperately for a time ; but the end was certain. The Russians carried out their measures of pacification with an unflinching hand. Floggings and shootings and hangings were in full vigour. The Russian authorities recognised the equal rights of women by administering the scourge and the rope and the bullet to them as well as to men. Drove of prisoners were sent to Siberia. New steps were taken for denationalising the country and effecting its moral as well as physical subjugation. After a time the words of Marshal Sebastiani's famous announcement in 1831 became applicable once more, and order reigned in Warsaw. The intervention of England had done much the same service for Poland that the interposition of Don Quixote did for the boy whose master was flogging him. There was, to be sure, this difference in the conditions. Don Quixote did intervene practically ; and while he remained in sight the master pretended to be forgiving and merciful. It was only when the hero had ridden away that the master grimly tied up the boy again and flogged him worse than ever. In the case of England there was no such show of forbearance. The sufferer was tied up under our very eyes and scourged again, and more fiercely, for the express reason that England had ventured to interfere with an unmeaning and ineffectual remonstrance. We have spoken of that school of Liberals who would not have intervened at all on behalf of Poland or any other nation. Many, perhaps most, persons will refuse to accept their principle. But we can hardly believe there is any one who will not admit that such a course of policy is wise, manly, and dignified when compared with that which

intrudes its intervention just far enough to irritate the oppressor and not far enough to be of the slightest benefit to the oppressed."

The effect of the policy pursued by England in this case was to bring about a certain coldness between the Emperor Napoleon and the English Government. This fact was made apparent some little time after when the dispute between Denmark and the Germanic Confederation came up in relation to the Schleswig-Holstein succession. We need not go very deeply now into the historical bearings of this dispute which long tormented philologists, jurisconsults and archæologists as well as statesmen. An irreverent Frenchman once declared that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but the Schleswig-Holstein question shall not pass away. Practically, however, the Schleswig-Holstein question would seem to have passed away so far as our times are concerned. It was in substance a question of the right of nationalities combined of later years with a dispute of succession. Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg were Duchies attached to Denmark. Holstein and Lauenburg were purely German in nationality and only held by the King of Denmark as Duke of Holstein and Lauenburg on much the same tenure as that by virtue of which our kings so long held Hanover. The King of Denmark sat as Duke of Holstein and Lauenburg in the old Germanic Diet which used to hold its meetings in Frankfort, the Diet of the Germanic Confederation which was abolished by the Prussian victory at Sadowa, and which Talleyrand once with grave sarcasm urged not to be precipitate in its decisions. Schleswig was attached more directly to the Danish Crown; but a large proportion of the population, much the larger proportion in the southern districts, were German, and there had long been an agitation going on in Germany about the claims and the rights of Schleswig. One of the claims was that Schleswig and Holstein should be united into one administrative system, and should be governed independently of the kingdom of Denmark, the King of Denmark to be the ruler of this state as the Emperor of Austria is King of Hungary. There can be no doubt that the heart of the German people was

deeply interested in the condition of the Schleswigers and Holsteiners. It was only natural that a great people should have been unwilling to see so many of their countrymen, on the very edge of Germany itself, kept under the rule of the Danish King. The tendency of Denmark always was towards an amalgamation of the Duchies into her own state system. The tendency of the Germans was to regard with extreme jealousy any movement that way, to descry evil purpose in even harmless innovations on the part of Denmark, and to make constant complaint about the tampering of the Danish authorities with the tongue and the rights of the Teutonic populations. In truth the claims of Germany and Denmark were irreconcilable. Put into plain words, the dispute was between Denmark which wanted to make the Duchies Danish, and Germany which wanted to have them German. The arrangement which bound them up with Denmark was purely diplomatic and artificial. Any one who would look realities in the face must have seen that some day or other the Germans would carry their point, and that the principle of nationalities would have its way in that case as it had done in so many others.

Suddenly the whole dispute became complicated with a question of succession. The King of Denmark, Frederick VII., died in November 1863, and was succeeded by Christian IX. Prince Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg claimed the succession to the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The late King of Denmark had no direct heir to succeed him, and the succession had been arranged in 1852 by the Great Powers of Europe. The treaty of London then settled it on Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, the father of the Princess of Wales. The settlement, however, was brought about by persuading the Duke of Augustenburg, Prince Frederick's father, heir of Holstein and claimant of Schleswig, to renounce his rights, and new Prince Frederick, the son, disputed in his own case the validity of the renunciation. The previous pretensions of Denmark to encroach on the rights of the German populations in the Duchies, had roused an angry feeling in Germany, and German

statesmen were willing to take advantage of any claim and any claimant to dispute the succession of the King of Denmark so far as the Duchies were concerned. The affairs of Prussia were now in the hands of a strong man; one of the strongest men modern times have known. Daring, unscrupulous, and crafty as Cavour, Von Bismarck was even already able to wield a power which had never been within Cavour's reach. The public intelligence of Europe had not yet recognised the marvellous combination of qualities which was destined to make their owner famous, and to prove a dissolving force in the settled systems of Germany, and indeed of the whole European continent. As yet the general opinion of the world set down Herr von Bismarck as simply a fanatical reactionary, a coarse sort of Metternich, a combination of bully and buffoon. The Schleswig-Holstein Question became, however, a very serious one for Denmark when it was taken up by Von Bismarck. There does not seem the slightest reason to suppose that Bismarck ever had any idea of maintaining the pretensions of the Prince of Augustenburg. Bismarck had always ridiculed them without any affectation of concealment. From first to last the mind of Bismarck was evidently made up that the Duchies should be annexed to Prussia. But for the time the claims of the Augustenburg Prince came in conveniently, and Prussia put on the appearance of giving them her sanction and support. The result of all this was that the Germanic Diet and the King of Denmark could not come to any terms of arrangement; and—to cut preliminaries short and get to what strictly concerns our history—war became certain. The Germanic Diet entrusted the conduct of the war to the hands of Austria and Prussia, who entered into joint agreements for the purpose. The German troops entered, first, Holstein, which under the command of the Diet they had a legal right to do, and then Schleswig, and war began. Denmark, one of the smallest and weakest kingdoms in the world, found herself engaged in conflict with Austria and Prussia combined. The little Danish David had defied two Goliaths to combat at one moment.

Were the Danes and their Sovereign and their Govern-

ment mad? Not at all. They well knew that they could not hold out alone against the two German Great Powers. But they counted on the help of Europe. \* Especially they counted on the help of England. For a long time they had got it into their heads that England was pledged to defend them against any assault from the side of Germany. Lord Russell in multitudinous despatches had very often given the Danish Government sound and sensible advice. He had constantly admonished them that they must for their own sakes deal fairly with the German populations. He had urgently recommended them to leave to the Germans and the German Governments no fair ground for complaint. He had never countenanced or encouraged any of the acts which tended to the enforced absorption of German populations into a Danish system. He had on the contrary more than once somewhat harshly rebuked the Danish Government for neglect or breach of engagements, and sternly pointed out the certain consequences of such a policy. But he had at the same time implied that if Denmark took the advice of England, England would not see her wronged. He had at all events declared, that if Denmark did not follow England's advice England would not come to her assistance in case she were attacked by the Germans. Denmark interpreted this as an assurance that if she followed England's counsels she might count on England's protection, and she insisted that she had strictly followed England's counsels for this very reason. When the struggle seemed approaching, Lord Palmerston said some words in the House of Commons at the close of a session, which seemed to convey a distinct assurance that England would defend Denmark in case she should be attacked by the German Powers. On July 23, 1863, he was questioned with reference to the course England intended to pursue in the event of the German Powers pressing too hardly on Denmark, and he then said: "We are convinced—I am convinced at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow the rights and interfere with the independence of Denmark, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend."

These words were afterwards explained as intended to be merely prophetic, and to indicate Lord Palmerston's private belief that in the event of Denmark being invaded, France, or Russia, or some State somewhere, would probably be generous enough to come to the assistance of the Danes. But when the words were spoken, it did not occur to the mind of any one to interpret them in such a sense. The part of Lord Palmerston's speech which contained them was dealing distinctly and exclusively with the policy of England. It was not supposed that an English Minister could expect to satisfy the House of Commons by merely giving a specimen of his skill in forecasting the probable policy of other States. Every one believed that Lord Palmerston was answering on behalf of the English Government and the English people.

The Danes counted with confidence on the help of England. They refused to accept the terms which Germany would have imposed. They prepared for war. Public opinion in England was all but unanimous in favour of Denmark. Five out of every six persons were for England's drawing the sword in her cause at once. Five out of every six of the small minority who were against war, were nevertheless in sympathy with the Danes. Many reasons combined to bring about this condition of national feeling. In the first instance very few people knew anything whatever of the merits of the controversy. Even professed politicians hardly understood the question. The general impression was, that it was purely the case of two strong Powers oppressing in wanton and wicked combination a weak but gallant people. Austria was not popular in England; Prussia was detested. Many Englishmen were angry with her because her Government had made the convention with Russia which has already been mentioned, and because she had a reactionary Minister and a half-despotic King. A large number of persons did not like the Germans they met in the City and in business generally. Some had disagreeable reminiscences of their travels in Prussia, and had been unfavourably impressed by the police systems of Berlin. Moreover it was then an article of faith with most Englishmen that Prussians were miserable

fellows who could only smoke and drink beer, and who, being unable to fight with any decent adversary, were trying to get a warlike reputation by attacking a very weak Power. *Punch* had a cartoon representing the conventional English soldier and sailor regarding with looks of utter contempt an Austrian and a Prussian, and agreeing that Englishmen ought not to be called on to fight such fellows, but offering to kick them if it were thought desirable. In England at this time, military strength meant the army of the Emperor of the French, and political sagacity was represented by the wisdom of the same sovereign.

A certain small number of persons in England sympathised with Denmark for another reason. The Prince of Wales had been married to the Princess Alexandra on March 10, 1863. The Princess Alexandra was, as it has been already said, the daughter of the King of Denmark. She was not a Dane, except as we may, if we like, call the Emperor of Brazil a Brazilian. But her family had now come to rule in Denmark, and she became in that sense a Danish princess. Her youth, her beauty, her goodness, her sweet and winning ways, had made her more popular than any foreign princess ever before was known to be in England. It seemed even to some who ought to have had more judgment that the virtues and charms of the Princess Alexandra, and the fact that she was now Princess of Wales, supplied ample proof of the justice of the Danish cause, and of the duty of England to support it in arms. Not small, therefore, was the disappointment spread over the country when it was found that the Danes were left alone to their defence, and that England was not to put out a hand to help them.

Yet it was as impossible as it would have been absurd for England to maintain in arms the cause of Denmark. To begin with, the cause was not one which England could reasonably have supported. The artificial arrangements by which the Duchies were bound to Denmark could not endure. They were the device of an era and a system of policy from which England was escaping as fast as she could. It was not a controversy which specially concerned the English people. England was only one of the parties

to the diplomatic arrangements which had bound up the Duchies and the Danish kingdom together. Lord Russell was willing at one moment to intervene by arms in support of Denmark if France would join with England, and he made a proposal of this kind to the French Government. The Emperor Napoleon refused to interfere. He had been hurt by England's refusal to join with him in sustaining Poland against Russia, and now was his time to make a return. Besides, he had, after the attempt at diplomatic intervention between Poland and Russia, issued invitations for a congress of European sovereigns to assemble in Paris and make a new settlement of Europe. The Governments to which the invitation was addressed had, for the most part, returned a civil acceptance, well knowing the project would come to nothing. Lord Russell refused to have anything to do with the Congress, and gave some excellent reasons for the refusal. The Emperor Napoleon was somewhat hurt by the chill common sense of Lord Russell's reply. The Emperor's invitation was evidently meant to be a document of historical and monumental interest. It was drawn up in the spirit of what Burke calls "a proud humility." It made allusion to the early misfortunes and exile of the writer, and put him forward as the one sovereign of Europe on whose face the winds of adversity had severely blown. It must have been painful to find that so much eloquence and emotion had been put into a State paper for nothing. The Emperor's turn had now come, and he would not join with England in sustaining the cause of Denmark. There was absolutely nothing for it but to leave the Danes to fight out their battle in the best way they could. Lord Palmerston put the matter very plainly in a letter to Lord Russell. "The truth is," he wrote, "that to enter into a military conflict with all Germany on Continental ground would be a serious undertaking. If Sweden and Denmark were actively co-operating with us, our 20,000 men might do a great deal; but Austria and Prussia could bring 200,000 or 300,000 into the field, and would be joined by the smaller German States." At a later period of the struggle Lord Palmerston spoke with full frankness to Count Apponyi, the Austrian ambassador.



He explained that the English Government had "abstained from taking the field in defence of Denmark, for many reasons—from the season of the year, from the smallness of our army, and the great risk of failure in a struggle with all Germany by land." But Lord Palmerston pointed out that "with regard to operations by sea, the positions would be reversed. We are strong, Germany is weak; and the German ports in the Baltic, North Sea, and Adriatic, would be greatly at our command." Therefore Lord Palmerston warned the Austrian Ambassador that a collision between England and Austria might happen if an Austrian squadron were to enter the Baltic in order to help the operations against Denmark. The Austrian Ambassador explained that his Government did not intend to send a squadron into the Baltic. This was an unofficial conversation between Palmerston and Count Apponyi, and had no effect on the fortunes of the war or on the diplomacy that brought it to an end.

The Danes fought with a great deal of spirit; but they were extravagantly outnumbered, and their weapons were miserably unfit to contend against their powerful enemies. The Prussian needle-gun came into play with terrible effect in the campaign, and it soon made all attempts at resistance on the part of the Danes utterly hopeless. The Danes lost their ground and their fortresses. They won one little fight on the sea, defeating some Austrian vessels in the German Ocean off Heligoland. The news was received with wild enthusiasm in England. Its announcement in the House of Commons drew down the unwonted manifestation of a round of applause from the Strangers' Gallery. But the struggle had ceased to be anything like a serious campaign. The English Government kept up active negotiations on behalf of peace, and at length succeeded in inducing the belligerents to agree to a suspension of arms, in order that a Conference of the Great Powers might be held in London. The Conference was called together. The populations of the Duchies about whom the whole dispute had taken place, were beginning now to suspect that their claims to independent existence would very probably be overlooked altogether, and that they were only

about to be passed from one ruler to another. They sent a deputation to London, and claimed to be represented directly at the Conference. Their claim was rejected. They, the very people whose national existence was the question in dispute, were informed that diplomacy made no account of them. They had no right to a voice, or even to a hearing, in the councils which were to dispose of their destinies. The Saxon minister, Count Beust, who afterwards transferred his abilities and energies to the service of Austria, did the best he could for them, and acted so far as lay in his power as the representative of their claims ; but they were not allowed any acknowledged representation at the Conference. The deliberations of the Conference came to nothing. Curiously enough the final rejection of all compromise came from the Danes. Whether they had still some lingering hope that by prolonging the war they could induce some Great Power to intervene on their behalf, or whether they were merely influenced by the doggedness of sheer desperation, we cannot pretend to know. But they proved suddenly obstinate ; at the last hour they rejected a proposal which Lord Palmerston described as reasonable in itself, and the Conference came to an end. The war broke out again. The renewed hostilities lasted, however, but a short time. It was plain now even to the Danes themselves that they could not hold their ground alone, and that no one was coming to help them. The Danish Government sent Prince John of Denmark direct to Berlin to negotiate for peace—they had had enough, perhaps, of foreign diplomatic intervention—and terms of peace were easily arranged. Nothing could be more simple. Denmark gave up everything she had been fighting for, and agreed to bear part of the expense which had been entailed upon the German Powers by the task of chastising her. The Duchies were surrendered to the disposal of the Allies, and nothing more was heard of the claims of the heir of Augustenburg. That claimant only got what is called in homely language the cold shoulder when he endeavoured to draw the attention of the Herr von Bismarck to his alleged right of succession. A new

war was to settle the ownership of the Duchies, and some much graver questions of German interest at the same time.

It was obviously impossible that the conduct of the English Government should pass unchallenged. They were quite right, as it seems to us, in not intervening on behalf of Denmark ; but they were not right in giving Denmark the least reason to believe that they ever would intervene in her behalf. It would have been a calamity if England had succeeded in persuading Louis Napoleon to join her in a war to enable Denmark to keep the Duchies ; it could not be to the credit of England that her Ministers had invited Louis Napoleon to join them in such a policy and had been refused. We cannot see any way of defending Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell against some sort of censure for the part they had taken in this transaction. It would have been a discredit to England if she had become the means of coercing the Duchies into subjection to Denmark, supposing such a thing possible in the long-run ; but her Ministers could claim no credit for not having done so. They would have done it if they could. They had thus given Europe full evidence at once of their desire and their incapacity. Their political opponents could not be expected to overlook such a chance of attack. Accordingly, in the two Houses of Parliament notices were given of a vote of censure on the Government. Lord Malmesbury, in Lord Derby's absence, proposed the resolution in the House of Lords, and it was carried by a majority of nine. The Government made little account of that ; the Lords always had a Tory majority. As Lord Palmerston himself had put it on a former occasion, the Government knew when they took office that their opponents had a larger pack of cards in the Lords than they had, and that whenever the cards came to be all dealt out the Opposition pack must show the greater number. In the House of Commons the matter was much more serious. On July 4, 1864, Mr. Disraeli himself moved the resolution condemning the conduct of the Government. The resolution invited the House to express its regret that "while the course pursued by her Majesty's Government has failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity

and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace." Mr. Disraeli's speech was ingenious and telling. He had a case which even a far less capable rhetorician than he must have made impressive; but he contrived more than once by sheer dexterity to make it unexpectedly stronger against the Government. Thus, for example, he went on during part of his opening observations to compare the policy of England and of France. He proceeded to show that France was just as much bound by the Treaty of Vienna, by the London Convention, by all the agreements affecting the integrity of Denmark, as England herself. Some of the Ministry sitting just opposite the orator caught at this argument as if it were an admission telling against Mr. Disraeli's case. They met his words with loud and emphatic cheers. The cheers meant to say, "Just so; France was responsible for the integrity of Denmark as much as England; why, then, do you find fault with us?" This was precisely what Mr. Disraeli wanted. Perhaps he had deliberately led up to this very point. Perhaps he had purposely allured his opponents on into the belief that he was making an admission in order to draw from some of them some note of triumph. He seized his opportunity now and turned upon his antagonists at once. "Yes," he exclaimed, "France is equally responsible; and how comes it then that the position of France in relation to Denmark is so free from embarrassment and so dignified; that no word of blame is uttered anywhere in Europe against France for what she has done in regard to Denmark, while your position is one of infinite perplexity, while you are everywhere accused and unable to defend yourselves? How could this be but because of some fatal mistake, some terrible mismanagement?" In truth it was not difficult for Mr. Disraeli to show mistakes in abundance. No sophist could have undertaken to defend all that Ministers had done. Such a defence would involve sundry paradoxes; for they had in some instances done the very thing to-day which they had declared the day before it would be impossible for them to do.

The Government did not make any serious attempts to justify all they had done. They were glad to seize upon the opportunity offered by an amendment, which Mr. Kinglake proposed, which merely declared the satisfaction with which the House had learned "that at this conjuncture her Majesty had been advised to abstain from armed intervention in the war now going on between Denmark and the German Powers." This amendment, it will be seen at once, did not meet the accusations raised by Mr. Disraeli. It did not say whether the Ministry had or had not failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark; or whether their conduct had or had not lowered the just influence of England in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace. It gave the go-by to such inconvenient questions, and simply asserted that the House was, at all events, glad to hear there was to be no interference in the war. Many doubted at first whether the Government would condescend to adopt Mr. Kinglake's amendment, or whether they would venture upon a distinct vindication of their conduct. Lord Palmerston, however, had an essentially practical way of looking at every question. He was of O'Connell's opinion that, after all, the verdict is the thing. He knew he could not get the verdict on the particular issues raised by Mr. Disraeli, but he was in good hope that he could get it on the policy of his administration generally. The Government therefore adopted Mr. Kinglake's amendment. Still the controversy was full of danger to Lord Palmerston. The advanced Liberals disliked him strongly for his lavish expenditure in fortification schemes, and for the manner in which he had thrown over the Reform Bill. They were not coerced, morally or otherwise, to support him merely because he had not gone into the war against Germany; for no responsible voice from the Opposition had said that the Conservatives, if in office, would have adopted a policy of intervention. On the contrary, it was from Lord Stanley that there came during the debate the most unwarlike sentiment uttered during the whole controversy. Lord Stanley bluntly declared that "to engage in a European war for the sake of these Duchies

would be an act, not of impolicy, but of insanity." There were members of the Peace Society itself probably who would have hesitated before adopting this view of the duties of a nation. If war be permissible at all, they might have doubted whether the oppression of a small people is not as fair a ground of warlike intervention as the grievance of a numerous population. When such sentiments came from a leader of the party proposing the vote of censure, it is clear that the men who were for non-intervention as a principle were left free to vote on one side or the other as they pleased. Mr. Disraeli did not want to pledge them to warlike action any more than Lord Palmerston. Many of them would, perhaps, rather have voted with Mr. Disraeli than with Lord Palmerston if they could see their way fairly to such a course ; and on the votes of even a few of them, the result of the debate depended. They held the fate of Lord Palmerston's Ministry in the hollow of their hand.

Lord Palmerston seems to have decided the question for them. His speech closing the debate was a masterpiece not of eloquence, not of political argument, but of practical parliamentary tactics. He spoke, as was his fashion, without the aid of a single note. It was a wonderful spectacle that of the man of eighty, thus in the growing morning pouring out his unbroken stream of easy effective eloquence. He dropped the particular questions connected with the vote of censure almost immediately, and went into a long review of the whole policy of his administration. He spoke as if the resolution before the House were a proposal to impeach the Government for the entire course of their domestic policy. He passed in triumphant review all the splendid feats which Mr. Gladstone had accomplished in the reduction of taxation ; he took credit for the commercial treaty with France, and for other achievements in which at the time of their accomplishment he had hardly even affected to feel an interest. He spoke directly at the economical Liberals ; the men who were for sound finance and freedom of international commerce. The regular Opposition, as he well knew, would vote against him ; the regular supporters of the Ministry would vote for him. Nothing could alter the course to be taken by either of these parties. The

advanced Liberals, the men whom possibly Palmerston in his heart rather despised as calculators and economists,—these might be affected one way or the other by the manner in which he addressed himself to the debate. To these and at these he spoke. He knew that Mr. Gladstone was the one leading man in the Ministry whom they regarded with full trust and admiration, and on Mr. Gladstone's exploits he virtually rested his case. His speech said in plain words : "If you vote for this resolution proposed by Mr. Disraeli you turn Mr. Gladstone out of office ; you give the Tories who understand nothing about Free Trade and who opposed the French Commercial Treaty, an opportunity of marring all that he has made." Some of Lord Palmerston's audience were a little impatient now and then. "What has all this to do with the question before the House?" was murmured from more than one bench. It had everything to do with the question that was really before the House. That question was, "Shall Palmerston remain in office, or shall he go out and the Tories come in?" The advanced Liberals had the decision put into their hands. As Lord Palmerston reviewed the financial and commercial history of his administration, they felt themselves morally coerced to support the Ministry which had done so much for the policy that was especially the offspring of their inspiration. When the division was taken it was found that there were 295 votes for Mr. Disraeli's resolution and 313 for the amendment. Lord Palmerston was saved by a majority of eighteen. It was not a very brilliant victory. There were not many votes to spare. But it was a victory. The Conservative miss by a foot was as good for Lord Palmerston as a miss by a mile. It gave him a secure tenure of office for the rest of his life. Such as it was, the victory was won mainly by his own skill, energy, and astuteness, by the ready manner in which he evaded the question actually in debate, and rested his claim to acquittal on services which no one proposed to disparage. The conclusion was thoroughly illogical, thoroughly practical, thoroughly English. Lord Palmerston knew his time, his opportunity, and his men.

That was the last great speech made by Lord Palmerston. That was the last great occasion on which he was called

upon to address the House of Commons. The effort was worthy of the emergency, and, at least in an artistic sense, deserved success. The speech exactly served its purpose. It had no brilliant passages. It had no hint of an elevated thought. It did not trouble itself with any profession of exalted purpose or principle. It did not contain a single sentence that any one would care to remember after the emergency had passed away. But it did for Lord Palmerston what great eloquence might have failed to do; what a great orator by virtue of his very genius and oratorical instincts might only have marred. It took captive the wavering minds, and it carried the division.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### EBB AND FLOW

ONE cannot study English politics, even in the most superficial way, without being struck by the singular regularity with which they are governed by the law of action and reaction. The succession of ebb and flow in the tides is not more regular and more certain. A season of political energy is sure to come after a season of political apathy. After the sleeping comes the waking; after the day of work, the night of repose. A liberal spirit is abroad and active; it carries all before it for a while; it pushes great reforms through; it projects others still greater. Suddenly a pause comes; and a whisper is heard that we have had too much of Reform; and the whisper grows into a loud remonstrance, and the remonstrance into what seems to be an almost universal declaration. Then sets in a period of reaction, during which Reform is denounced as if it were a treason, and shuddered at as though it were a pestilence. For a season people make themselves comfortable, and say to each other that England has attained political perfection; that only fools and traitors would ask her to venture on any further change, and that we are all going now to have a contented rest. Just as this condition of things seems to have become a settled habit and state of existence, the new



reaction begins ; and before men can well note the change, the country is in the fervour of a Reform fit again. It is so in our foreign policy. We seem to have settled down to a Washingtonian principle of absolute isolation from the concerns and complications of foreign countries, until suddenly we become aware of a rising sea of reaction, and almost in a moment we are in the thick of a policy which involves itself in the affairs of every state from Finland to Sicily, and from Japan to the Caspian Sea. It is the same with our colonies. We are just on the eve of a blunt and cool dismissal of them from all dependence on us, when suddenly we find out that they are the strength of our limbs and the light of our eyes, and that to live without them would be only death in life ; and for another season the patriotism of public men consists in professions of unalterable attachment to the colonies. It is so with regard to warlike purpose and peaceful purpose ; with regard to armaments, fortifications, law reform, everything. An ordinary observer ought to be able almost always to forecast the weather of the coming season in English politics. When action has run its course pretty nearly, reaction is sure ; and it ought not to be very difficult to foresee when the one has had its season and the other is to succeed.

The explanation of this phenomenon is not to be found in the fact that the people of these countries are, as Mr. Carlyle says, "mostly fools." They do not all thus change their opinions in sudden mechanical springs of alternation. The explanation is not to be sought in any change of national opinion at all, but rather in a change in the ascendancy between two tolerably well-balanced parties in politics and thought. The people of these countries, or perhaps it should be said of England especially, are born into Liberalism and Conservatism. In Ireland and in Scotland the condition of things is modified by other facts, and the same general rule will hardly apply ; but in England this is, roughly speaking, the law of life. Men as a rule remain in the political condition—we can hardly speak of the political convictions—to which they were born. But the majority give themselves little trouble

about the matter. If there is a great stir made by those just above them in politics, and to whom they look up, they will take some interest, and will exhibit it in any desirable way; but they do not move of themselves, and when their leaders appear to acquiesce in anything for a season they withdraw their attention altogether. Many a man is hardly conscious of whether he is Liberal or Conservative until he gets into a crowd somewhere, and hears his neighbours shouting. Then he shouts with those whom he knows to be of the opinions he is understood to hold, and he shouts himself into political conviction. This is the condition of the majority on both sides. It takes immense trouble on the part of the leaders to rouse the mass of their followers into a condition of genuine activity. The majority are like some of the heavy-winged insects who hardly ever use their wings, and who, when for some reason they are anxious to hoist themselves into the air, may be seen of a summer twilight making their preparations so long and slowly that a passing observer would never suppose they meant any such unwonted movement as a flight. The political leaders, and the followers immediately within hearing of their voices, have for the most part the direction of affairs in their hands—these and the newspapers. The leaders, the House of Commons, and the active local men in cities and boroughs—these and the newspapers make up what we commonly understand to be public opinion. The change in public opinion, or what seems to be such, is when one set succeeds for a time in getting predominance over the other. The predominance is usually transferred when one set has done or said all it is quite prepared to do or say for the moment. Then the other, having lost patience or gained courage, rushes in and gets his turn. It is like a contest in some burlesque eclogue, in which each singer has his chance only when the rival is out of breath, and he can strike in and keep singing until he too feels his lungs fail him and has to give way. The Liberals are in power, and they carry some measures by the strength of their parliamentary majority. The moment comes when they go further than the patience of their opponents will bear, or when they have nothing more to suggest at the moment.

In either case the managers of the Opposition arouse themselves; and they say, "We cannot endure any more of this"; or they ask each other why they have endured so much. They stir up their whole party with all the energy they can muster, and at last, after tremendous effort, they get their shard-borne beetle hoisted for his drowsy flight. The others have sunk into comparative languor. They have done what they wanted to do; they have, according to the French phrase, exhausted their mandate; and there is nothing by which they can call the whole strength of their party into action. They do not any longer see their way as well as their opponents do. They are not so angry or so resolute. Perhaps they think they have gone a little too far. The Conservative newspapers are all astir and aflame. The Conservative passion is roused. The Conservative lungs are fresh and strong; their rivals are out of breath. In a word, the Conservatives get what American politicians call "the floor"; and this is Conservative reaction. All the time it is probable that not one man in every ten thousand of the population has really changed his opinion. The Conservatives hold their place for a certain time until their opponents have recovered their energies, and have lost their patience; until their passion to attack is more thorough and genuine than the power of the men in possession to resist. Then the Liberal beetle is got upon his wings, and Liberalism has its time again.

During all these changes, however, the Liberal movement is necessarily gaining ground. Reaction in English politics never now goes the length of undoing what has been done. It only interposes a delay, and a warning against moving too far and too fast in the same direction. Therefore, after each flux and reflux it is a matter of practical necessity that the cause which means movement of some kind must be found to have gained upon the cause which would prefer to stand still. It is almost needless to say that the Liberal party have not always been the actual means of carrying a liberal movement. All great Conservative leaders have recognised in good time the necessity of accepting some principle of Reform. In a practical country like England, the Conservatives

could not maintain a party of any kind if it were absolutely certain that their mission was to oppose every reform, and the mission of the Liberals to promote it. As a principle, the business of Liberalism is to cry "forwards"; that of Conservatism to cry "back." The action and reaction of which we speak is that of Liberalism and Conservatism; not of the leaders of Liberal and Tory Administrations.

The movement of reaction against Reform in domestic policy was in full force during the earlier years of Lord Palmerston's Government. In home politics, and where finance and commercial legislation were not concerned, Palmerston was a Conservative Minister. He was probably on the whole more highly esteemed among the rank and file of the Opposition in the House of Commons than by the rank and file on his own side. Not a few of the Conservative country gentlemen would in their hearts have been glad if he could have remained Prime Minister for ever. His thoroughly English ways, appealed directly to their sympathies. His instincts went with theirs. They liked his courage and his animal spirits. He was always ready to fling cheery defiance in the face of any foreign foe; just as they had been taught to believe that their grandfathers used to fling defiance in the face of Bonaparte and France. He was a faithful member of the Church of England, but his certainly was not an austere Protestantism, and he allowed religion to come no further into the affairs of ordinary life than suited a country gentleman's ideas of the fitness of things. There was among Tory country gentlemen also a certain doubt or dread as to the manner in which eccentric and exoteric genius might manage the affairs of England when the Conservatives came to have a government of their own, and when Lord Derby could no longer take command. These, therefore, all liked Palmerston, and helped by their favour to swell the sails of his popularity. Many of those who voted, with their characteristic fidelity to party, for Mr. Disraeli's resolution of censure, were glad in their hearts that Lord Palmerston came safely out of the difficulty.

But as the years went on there were manifest signs of

the coming and inevitable reaction. One of the most striking of these indications was found in the position taken by Mr. Gladstone. For some time Mr. Gladstone had been more and more distinctly identifying himself with the opinions of the advanced Liberals. The advanced Liberals themselves were of two sections or fractions, working together almost always, but very distinct in complexion; and it was Mr. Gladstone's fortune to be drawn by his sympathies to both alike. He was of course drawn towards the Manchester School by his economic views; by his agreement with them on all subjects relating to finance and to freedom of commerce. But the Manchester Liberals were for non-intervention in foreign politics; and they carried this into their sympathies as well as into their principles. They had never shown much interest in the struggles of other nations for political liberty. They did not seem to think it was the business of Englishmen to make demonstrations about Italians, or Poles, or French Republicans. The other section of the advanced Liberals were sometimes even flightily eager in their sympathies with the Liberal movements of the Continent. Mr. Gladstone was in communion with the movements of foreign Liberals, as he was with those of English Free-traders and economists. He was therefore qualified to stand between both sections of the advanced Liberals of England, and give one hand to each. During the debates on Italian questions of 1860 and 1861 he had identified himself with the cause of Italian unity and independence.

In the year 1864 Garibaldi came on a visit to England, and was received in London with an outburst of enthusiasm, the like whereof had not been seen since Kossuth first passed down Cheapside, and perhaps was not seen even then. It was curious to notice how men of opposing parties were gradually swept or sucked into this whirlpool of enthusiasm, and how aristocracy and fashion, which had always held aloof from Kossuth, soon crowded round Garibaldi. At first the leading men of nearly all parties held aloof except Mr. Gladstone. He was among the very first and most cordial in his welcome to Garibaldi. Then the Liberal leaders in general thought they had better

consult for their popularity by taking Garibaldi up. A lady of high rank and great political influence frankly expressed her opinion that Garibaldi was nothing more than a respectable brigand, but she joined in doing public honour to him nevertheless, acknowledging that it would be inconvenient for her husband to keep aloof and risk his popularity. Then the Conservative leaders too began to think it would never do for them to hold back when the prospect of a general election was so closely overshadowing them, and they plunged into the Garibaldi welcome. Men of the class of Lord Palmerston cared nothing for Garibaldi. Men like Lord Derby disliked and despised him; but the crowd ran after him, and the leaders on both sides, after having looked on for a moment with contempt, and another moment with amazement, fairly pulled off their hats and ran with the crowd, shouting and hallooing like the rest. The peerage then rushed at Garibaldi. He was beset by dukes, mobbed by countesses. He could not, by any possibility, have so divided his day as to find time for accepting half the invitations of the noble and new friends who fought and scrambled for him. It was a perpetual trouble to his secretaries and his private friends to decide between the rival claims of a prince of the blood and a prime minister, an archbishop and a duchess, the Lord Chancellor and the leader of the Opposition. The Tories positively outdid the Liberals in the competition. The crowd in the streets were perfectly sincere, some acclaiming Garibaldi because they had a vague knowledge that he had done brave deeds somewhere, and represented a cause; others, perhaps the majority, because they assumed that he was somehow opposed to the Pope. The leaders of society were for the most part not sincere. Three out of every four of them had always previously spoken of Garibaldi—when they spoke of him at all—as a mere buccaneer and filibuster. The whole thing ended in a quarrel between the aristocracy and the democracy; and Garibaldi was got back to his island somehow. Had he ever returned to England he would probably have found himself unembarrassed by the attentions of the Windsor uniform and the Order of the Garter. The whole episode was not

one to fill the soul of an unconcerned spectator with great respect for the manner in which crowds and leaders sometimes act in England. Mr. Gladstone was one of the few among the leaders who were undoubtedly sincere, and the course he took made him a great favourite with the advanced Radicals.

Mr. Gladstone had given other indications of a distinct tendency to pass over altogether from Conservatism, and even from Peelism, into the ranks of the Radical Reformers. On May 11, 1864, Mr. Baines brought on a motion in the House of Commons for the reduction of the borough franchise from £10 rental to £6. During the debate that followed Mr. Gladstone made a remarkable declaration. He contended that the burden of proof rested upon those "who would exclude forty-nine fiftieths of the working classes from the franchise"; "it is for them to show the unworthiness, the incapacity, and the misconduct of the working class." "I say," he repeated, "that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger, is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution." The bill was rejected, as every one knew it would be. A franchise bill introduced by a private member on a Wednesday is not supposed to have much prospect of success. But the speech of Mr. Gladstone gave an importance to the debate and to the occasion which it would not be easy to overrate. The position taken up by all Conservative minds, no matter to which side of politics their owners belonged, had been that the claim must be made out for those seeking an extension of the suffrage in their favour; that they must show imperative public need, immense and clear national and political advantage, to justify the concession; that the mere fact of their desire and fitness for the franchise ought not to count for anything in the consideration. Mr. Gladstone's way of looking at the question created enthusiasm on the one side—consternation and anger on the other. This was the principle of Rousseau's "Social Contract" many voices exclaimed; the principle of the rights of man; the red republic; the social and democratic revolution; anything, everything that is subversive and

anarchical. Early in the following session there was a motion introduced by Mr. Dillwyn, a staunch and persevering Reformer, declaring that the position of the Irish State Church was unsatisfactory, and called for the early attention of her Majesty's Government. Mr. Gladstone spoke on the motion, and drew a contrast between the State Church of England and that of Ireland, pointing out that the Irish Church ministered only to the religious wants of one-eighth or one-ninth of the community amid which it was established. In reply to a letter of remonstrance Mr. Gladstone explained, not long after, that he had not recommended any particular action as a consequence of Mr. Dillwyn's resolution, regarding the question as yet "remote and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." It was evident, however, that his mind would be found to be made up at any time when the question should become practical, and it was highly probable that his own speech had greatly hastened the coming of that time. The eyes of all Radical Reformers, therefore, turned to Mr. Gladstone as the future Minister of Reform in Church and State.\* He became from the same moment an object of distrust, and something approaching to detestation, in the eyes of all steady-going Conservatives.

Meanwhile there were many changes taking place in the social and political life of England. Many eminent men passed away during the years that Lord Palmerston held his almost absolute sway over the House of Commons. One man we may mention in the first instance, although he was no politician, and his death in nowise affected the prospects of parties. The attention of the English people was called from questions of foreign policy and of possible intervention in the Danish quarrel, by an event which happened on the Christmas eve of 1863. That day it became known throughout London that the author of "Vanity Fair" was dead. Mr. Thackeray died suddenly at the house in Kensington which he had lately had built for him in the fashion of that Queen Anne period which he loved and had illustrated so admirably. He was still in the very prime of life; no one had expected that his career was so soon to close. It had not been in any sense



a long career. Success had come somewhat late to him, and he was left but a short time to enjoy it. We have already spoken of his works and his literary character. Since the publication of the "Newcomes," he had not added to his reputation; indeed it hardly needed any addition. He had established himself in the very foremost rank of English novelists; with Fielding and Goldsmith and Miss Austen and Dickens. He had been a literary man and hardly anything else; having had little to do with politics or political journalism. Once indeed he was seized with a sudden ambition to take a seat in the House of Commons, and at the general election of 1857 he offered himself as a candidate for the city of Oxford in opposition to Mr. Cardwell. He was not elected; and he seemed to accept failure cheerfully as a hint that he had better keep to literary work for the future. He would go back to his author's desk, he said good-humouredly; and he kept his word. It is not likely that he would have been a parliamentary success. He had no gift of speech, and had but little interest in the details of party politics. His political views were sentiments rather than opinions. Most of his admirers would probably have been sorry to see him involved in the partisan debates of the House of Commons, where any practised official trained to glibness or any overbearing declaimer would have been far more than a match for him, and where he had no special need or call to go. It is not true that success in Parliament is incompatible with literary distinction. Macaulay and Grote, and two of Thackeray's own craft, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton, may be called as recent witnesses to disprove that common impression. But these were men who had a distinctly political object, or who loved political life, and were only following their star when they sought seats in the House of Commons. Thackeray had no such vocation and would have been as much out of place in parliamentary debate as a painter or a musician. He had no need to covet parliamentary reputation. As it was well said when the news of his defeat at Oxford reached London, the Houses of Lords and Commons together could not have produced "Barry

Lyndon" and "Pendennis." His early death was a source not only of national but of world-wide regret. It eclipsed the Christmas gaiety of nations. Thackeray was as much admired and appreciated in America as in England. Mr. Russell, the correspondent of the *Times*, has given an amusing account of a Southern Confederate leader engaged in an attempt to run the Northern blockade, who kept talking all the time, and even at the most exciting and perilous moments, about the various characters in Thackeray's novels. If Thackeray died too soon, it was only too soon for his family and his friends. His fame was secure. He could hardly with any length of years have added a cubit to his literary stature.

A whole group of statesmen had passed prematurely away. Sir James Graham had died after several years of a quiet career; still a celebrity in the House of Commons, but not much in the memory of the public outside it. One of his latest speeches in Parliament was on the Chinese war of 1860. On the last day of the session of 1861, and when almost all the other members had left the House, he remained for a while talking with a friend and former colleague, and as they were separating, Sir James Graham expressed a cheery hope that they should meet on the first day of the next session in the same place. But Graham died in the following October. Sidney Herbert had died a few weeks before in the same year. Sidney Herbert had been raised to the peerage as Lord Herbert of Lea. He had entered the House of Lords because his breaking health rendered it impossible to stand the wear and tear of life in the Commons, and he loved politics and public affairs, and could not be induced to renounce them and live in quiet. He was a man of great gifts, and was looked upon as a prospective Prime Minister. He had a graceful and gracious bearing; he was an able administrator, and a very skilful and persuasive debater. His style of speaking was what might be called, if it is lawful to coin an expression for the purpose, the "pointed-conversational." He never declaimed; never even tried to be what is commonly called eloquent; but his sentences came out with a singularly expressive combination of force and ease, every argu-

ment telling, every stroke having the lightness of an Eastern champion's swordplay. He had high social station, and was in every way fitted to stand at the head of English public affairs. He was but fifty-one years of age when he died. The country for some time looked on Sir George Lewis as a man likely to lead an administration; but he too passed away before his natural time. He died two years after Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert, and was only some fifty-seven years old at his death. Lord Elgin was dead and Lord Canning; and Lord Dalhousie had been some years dead. The Duke of Newcastle died in 1864. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Glasgow, said of these, that "they had been swept away in the full maturity of their faculties and in the early stages of middle life—a body of men strong enough of themselves in all the gifts of wisdom and of knowledge, of experience and of eloquence, to have equipped a Cabinet for the service of the country." Nor must we omit to mention the death of Cardinal Wiseman on February 15, 1865. Cardinal Wiseman had outlived the popular clamour once raised against him in England. There was a time when his name would have set all the pulpit-drums of no-Popery rattling; he came at length to be respected and admired everywhere in England as a scholar and a man of ability. He was a devoted ecclesiastic, whose zeal for his church was his honour, and whose earnest labour in the work he was set to do had shortened his busy life.

During the time of the first outbreak of the Civil War in the United States to its close all these men were removed from the scene, and the Civil War was hardly over when Richard Cobden was quietly laid in an English country churchyard. Mr. Cobden paid a visit to his constituents of Rochdale in November 1864, to address them on public affairs. He was at the time struggling against a bronchial attack which made it imprudent for him to attend a public meeting—especially imprudent to try to speak in public. He had to travel a long way in bad weather. His friends endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Rochdale; but he was convinced that the condition of political affairs was so full of seriousness that he could not consistently with

his strong sense of duty put off addressing his constituents. He had had probably some presentiment of his death ; for not long before he had passed, in company with his friend Mr. Bright, the place where his only son lay buried, and he told Mr. Bright that he should soon be laid beside him. He went to Rochdale and spoke to a great public meeting, and he did not appear to have lacked any of his usual ease and energy. This speech, the last he ever made, contained the famous passage so often quoted and criticised, which compared the undergraduate's knowledge of Chicago with his knowledge of the Ilyssus. "I will take any undergraduate," said Cobden, "now at Oxford or Cambridge, and I will ask this young gentleman to walk up to a map of the United States and put his finger upon the city of Chicago, and I will undertake to say that he will not go within a thousand miles of it. When I was at Athens I sallied forth one summer morning to see the far-famed river the Ilyssus, and after walking some hundred yards up what appeared to be the bed of a winter torrent, I came up to a number of Athenian laundresses, and I found that they had dammed up this far-famed classic river, and that they were using every drop of the water for their linen and such sanitary purposes. I say why should not the young gentlemen who are taught all about the geography of the Ilyssus know something about the geography of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri?" Mr. Cobden has always been charged on the faith of this contrast with a desire to throw contempt on the study of the classics, and with an intention to measure the comparative value of ancient and modern literature by the relative commercial importance of Chicago and the Ilyssus. He had no such purpose. He merely meant to show that the men who dogmatised about modern countries and politics ought to know something of the subject before they spoke and wrote. He contended that it is ridiculous to call a modern political writer educated because he knows something about classic Greece and nothing about the United States. The humorous illustration about the Ilyssus Mr. Cobden had used in a former speech ; and curiously enough something to much the same purpose had been said by Byron about the Ilyssus

before, without any one falling foul of the author of "Childe Harold," and accusing him of disparaging the culture of Greece. Byron wrote that "places without a name and rivers not laid down on maps may one day, when more known, be justly esteemed superior subjects for the pencil and the pen to the dry ditch of the Ilyssus and the bogs of Bœotia." Cobden had been a good deal provoked, as most sensible persons were, by the flood of writing poured out on the country during the American Civil War, in which citations from Thucydides were habitually introduced to settle questions of military and political controversy in the United States. That was the day for public instructors, of the inspired schoolboy type, who, sometimes to say the truth, knew little of the Greek literature from which they paraded their quotations, but who knew still less about the geography or the political conditions of America; who were under the impression that the Mississippi flowed east and west, and talked complacently of English war steamers getting into Lake Erie, apparently making no account of so considerable an obstacle as the Falls of Niagara.

This was Cobden's last speech. He did not come up to London until the March of 1865, and the day on which he travelled was so bitterly cold that the bronchial affection from which he was suffering became cruelly aggravated. One of the last private letters he ever wrote enclosed to a friend an unsolicited contribution for the relief of a poor young Englishwoman, whose husband, an American seaman, had just died in London, leaving her with a newly-born infant. He sank rapidly, and on April 2 he died. The scene in the House of Commons next evening was very touching. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli both spoke of Cobden with genuine feeling and sympathy; but Mr. Bright's few and broken words were as noble an epitaph as friendship could wish for the grave of a great and a good man. Some critics found fault with Lord Palmerston for having spoken of Cobden's as "Demosthenic eloquence." That simple conversational style, it was asked—does Lord Palmerston call that Demosthenic? Did he not use the word as a piece of unmeaning praise, merely because it came first to his lips? On the contrary, it is probable

that Palmerston thought the word expressed exactly what he wished to say. We are apt to think of the eloquence of Demosthenes as above all things energetic, commanding, overbearing by its strength and its action. But this is a superficial way of regarding the great orator. What is the essential characteristic of the oratory of Demosthenes, in which it differs from that of almost every other orator, ancient and modern? Surely its intensely practical nature; the fact that nothing is spoken without a present and determinate purpose; that no word is used which does not bear upon the argument the speaker would enforce. Cobden had not the power or the polish of Demosthenes, nor can his manner have been at all like that of the Athenian; but his eloquence was always moulded naturally and unconsciously in the true spirit of Demosthenes. It was the eloquence of one who claimed only to be heard for his cause, and for the arguments with which he should commend it to the intelligence of his audience. Those who found fault with Lord Palmerston's epithet only failed to understand its application.

The Liberal party then found themselves approaching a general election, with their ranks thinned by many severe losses. The Government had lost one powerful member by an event other than death. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Westbury, had resigned his office in consequence of a vote of the House of Commons. Lord Westbury had made many enemies. He was a man of great capacity and energy, into whose nature the scorn of forms and of lesser intelligence entered far too freely. His character was somewhat wanting in the dignity of moral elevation. He had a tongue of marvellous bitterness. His sarcastic power was probably unequalled in the House of Commons while he sat there; and when he came into the House of Lords he fairly took away the breath of stately and formal peers by the unsparing manner in which he employed his most dangerous gift. His style of cruel irony was made all the more effective by the peculiar suavity of the tone in which he gave out his sarcasms and his epithets. With a face that only suggested soft bland benevolence, with eyes half closed as that of a mediæval saint, and in accents of

subdued mellifluous benignity, the Lord Chancellor was wont to pour out a stream of irony that corroded like some deadly acid. Such a man was sure to make enemies ; and the time came when, in the Scriptural sense, they found him out. He had been lax in his manner of using his patronage. In one case he had allowed an official of the House of Lords to retire, and to receive a retiring pension, while a grave charge connected with his conduct in another public office was to Lord Westbury's knowledge impending over him ; and Lord Westbury had appointed his own son to the place thus vacated. Thus at first sight it naturally appeared that Lord Westbury had sanctioned the pensioning off of a public servant against whom a serious charge was still awaiting decision, in order that a place might be found for the Lord Chancellor's own son. In the other case, that of an appointment to the Leeds Bankruptcy Court, the authority of Lord Westbury had been made use of by a member of his family to sanction a very improper arrangement. In this case it was shown that Lord Westbury knew nothing of the proposal, and had never had any idea of assisting any member of his family by his influence in the matter. No one believed that even in the former case he had been influenced by any corrupt motive. He had been led into error by a too easy good-nature towards certain members of his family, and by a carelessness which the engrossing character of his other duties might at least have excused, if it could not have justified. Still there could be no doubt that the manner in which he had exercised his patronage, or allowed it to be exercised, was deserving of reprehension.

The question was taken up by the House of Commons ; and somewhat unfortunately taken up in the first instance by a strong political opponent of the Government. On July 3, 1865, Mr. Ward Hunt moved a distinct vote of censure on the Lord Chancellor. The House did not agree to the resolution, which would have branded the Lord Chancellor's conduct as "highly reprehensible, and calculated to throw discredit on the administration of the high offices of the State." It, however, accepted an amendment which, while acquitting Lord Westbury of

any corrupt motive, declared that the granting of the pension showed a laxity of practice and a want of caution with regard to the public interests on the part of the Lord Chancellor. The Government were not able to resist this resolution. Lord Palmerston made the best effort he could to save the Lord Chancellor; but the common feeling of the House held that the words of the resolution were not too strong; and the Government had to bow to it. The Lord Chancellor immediately resigned his office. No other course was fairly open to him. The Government lost a man of singular ability and energy. Lord Westbury's fall was not perhaps so much the result of the one or two transactions for which the censure was passed, as of the growing dislike which both Houses had come to feel for an intellect too keen to be scrupulous, and a nature which brought even to the uninspiring business of law reforms some of the fierce animosities to which the tongue of a Swift would hardly have given a more bitter expression. Many thought, when all was done, that he had been somewhat harshly used. He would, perhaps, have been greatly surprised himself to know how many kindly things were said of him.

The hour of political reaction was evidently near at hand. Five years had passed away since the withdrawal of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill; and five years may represent in ordinary calculation the ebb or flow of the political tide. The dissolution of Parliament was near. Lord Derby described the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the session of 1865, as a sort of address very proper to be delivered by an aged minister to a moribund Parliament. The Parliament had run its course. It had accomplished the rare feat of living out its days, and having to die by simple efflux of time. On July 6, 1865, Parliament was dissolved. Mr. Disraeli's address to the electors of Buckinghamshire, sent out before the dissolution, distinctly declared that the issue which the country would have to decide concerned the National Church and the franchise. "The maintenance of a National Church," he said, "involves the question whether the principle of religion shall be an element of our political



constitution; whether the State shall be consecrated; or whether, dismissing the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, our scheme of government should degenerate into a mere system of police." "I see nothing," he proclaimed, "in such a result but the corruption of nations and the fall of empires." As regards the franchise he was vaguely grandiloquent; and both the vagueness and the grandiloquence were doubtless deliberate and to serve a purpose. "On the extension of the Electoral Franchise," he observed, "depends the distribution of power." He was of opinion that "the primary plan of our ancient constitution, so rich in various wisdom, indicates the course we ought to pursue." What that course was Mr. Disraeli took good care not to explain too clearly. The ancient constitution, he showed, had "secured our popular rights by entrusting power not to an indiscriminate multitude, but to the Estate or Order of the Commons; and a wise Government should be careful that the elements of that Estate should bear a due relation to the moral and material development of the country." Public opinion, he suggested, might not be yet ripe enough "to legislate on the subject; but the country "might ponder over it with advantage, so that when the time comes for action we may legislate in the spirit of the English Constitution, which would absorb the best of every class, and not fall into a democracy, which is the tyranny of one class, and that one the least enlightened." Translated into plain English, these pompous generalities meant clearly enough, although perhaps men did not all see it just then, that Mr. Disraeli would be prepared, if his turn should arrive, to bring in a Reform Bill, and that he still had hopes of being able to satisfy the country without going too far in the direction of popular suffrage. But it seems evident now that he had left it open to him to take even that course should it come in his way. No matter how wide the extension of the franchise which he had found himself driven to make, he could always say that in his opinion it only absorbed the best of a class, and did not allow us to fall into a democracy.

"Which spills the foremost foeman's life, that party

conquers in the strife." The first blow was struck in the city of London, and the Liberals carried all the seats. Four Liberals were elected. In Westminster the contest was somewhat remarkable. The constituency of Westminster always had the generous ambition to wish to be represented by at least one man of distinction. Westminster had been represented by Fox. It had more lately had Sir Francis Burdett for one of its representatives, and Cochrane for another. Byron's friend Hobhouse long represented Westminster. More lately still it had had Sir de Lacy Evans, not much of a politician to be sure, but a very gallant soldier, a man whose name was, at all events, to adopt the French phrase, "in the play bill." This time Mr. Mill was induced to come out of his calm retirement in Avignon and accept the candidature for Westminster. He issued an address embodying his well-known political opinions. He declined to look after local business, and on principle he objected to pay any part of the expenses of election. It was felt to be a somewhat bold experiment to put forward such a man as Mill among the candidates for the representation of a popular constituency. His opinions were extreme. He was not known to belong to any church or religious denomination. He was a philosopher, and English political organisations do not love philosophers. He was almost absolutely unknown to his countrymen in general. Until he came forward as a leader of the agitation in favour of the Northern Cause during the Civil War, he had never, so far as we know, been seen on an English political platform. Even of the electors of Westminster very few had ever seen him before his candidature. Many were under the vague impression that he was a clever man who wrote wise books, and died long ago. He was not supposed to have any liking or capacity for parliamentary life. More than ten years before it was known to a few that he had been invited to stand for an Irish county and had declined. That was at the time when his observations on the Irish land tenure system and the condition of Ireland generally had filled the hearts of many Irishmen with delight and wonder—delight and wonder to find that a cold English philosopher and

economist should form such just and generous opinions about Irish questions, and should express them with such a noble courage. Since that time he had not been supposed to have any inclination for public life; nor we believe had any serious effort been made to tempt him out of his retirement. The idea now occurred to Mr. James Beal, a popular Westminster politician, and he pressed it so earnestly on Mill as a public duty that Mill did not feel at liberty to refuse. Mill was one of the few men who have only to be convinced that a thing was incumbent on them as a public duty to set about doing it forthwith, no matter how distasteful it might be to them personally, or what excellent excuses they might offer for leaving the duty to others. He had written things which might well make him doubtful about the prudence of courting the suffrages of an English popular constituency. He was understood to be a rationalist; he was a supporter of many political opinions that seemed to ordinary persons much like "fads," or crotchets, or even crazes. He had once said in his writings, that the working classes in England were given to lying. He had now to stand up on platforms before crowded and noisy assemblies where everything he had ever written or said could be made the subject of question and of accusation; and with enemies outside capable of torturing every explanation to his disadvantage. A man of independent opinions and who has not been ashamed to change his opinions when he thought them wrong, or afraid to put on record each opinion in the time when he held to it, is at much disadvantage on the hustings. He will find out there what it is to have written books and to have enemies. Mill triumphed over all the difficulties by downright courage and honesty. When asked at a public meeting, chiefly composed of working men, whether he had ever said the working classes were given to lying, he answered straight out, "I did"; a bold blunt admission without any qualification. The boldness and frankness of the reply struck home to the manhood of the working men who listened to him. Here they saw a leader who would never shrink from telling them the truth. Mr. Mill has himself

described what followed his answer. "Scarcely were these two words out of my mouth, when vehement applause resounded through the whole meeting. It was evident that the working people were so accustomed to expect equivocation and evasion from those who sought their suffrages, that when they found, instead of that, a direct avowal of what was likely to be disagreeable to them, instead of being affronted they concluded at once that this was a person they could trust. . . . The first working man who spoke after the incident I have mentioned (it was Mr. Odger) said that the working classes had no desire not to be told of their faults; they wanted friends, not flatterers; and felt under obligation to any one who told them anything in themselves which he sincerely believed to require amendment. And to this the meeting heartily responded." One is in doubt whether to admire more the frankness of the speaker or the manly good sense of those to whom he spoke. "As much to my surprise," says Mr. Mill, "as to that of any one, I was returned to Parliament by a majority of some hundreds over my Conservative competitor."

In many other instances there was a marked indication that the political tide had turned in favour of Liberal opinions. Mr. Thomas Hughes, author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," a Radical of the "muscular Christianity" order, as it was called, was returned for Lambeth. Mr. Duncan M'Laren, brother-in-law of Mr. Bright, and an advanced Radical, was elected for Edinburgh, unseating a mild Whig. Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, a brilliant young Radical, nephew of Macaulay, came into Parliament. In Ireland some men of strong opinions, of ability, and of high character found seats in the House of Commons for the first time. One of these was Mr. J. B. Dillon, a man who had been concerned in the Irish Rebellion of 1848. He had long opposed the idea of an armed rising, believing it inopportune and hopeless, but nevertheless when the movement was precipitated by events he went and took his place in the front of it with his leader. Mr. Dillon had lived for some years in the United States, and had lately returned to Ireland under an amnesty. He at once reassumed a leading part in Irish politics and won

a high reputation for his capacity and his integrity. He promised to have an influential part in bringing together the Irish members and the English Liberals, but his untimely death cut short what would unquestionably have been a very useful career. Wherever there was a change in the character of the new Parliament it seemed to be in favour of advanced Reform. It was not merely that the Tories were left in a minority, but that so many mild Whigs had been removed to give place to genuine Liberals. There seemed to be little doubt that this new Parliament would do something to make its existence memorable. No one surely could have expected that it would vindicate its claim in the peculiar manner that its short history illustrates. Mr. Disraeli himself expressed his opinion of the new Parliament after it had been but a short time sitting. He spoke of it as one which had distinctly increased the strength and the following of Mr. Bright. No one could fail to see, he pointed out, that Mr. Bright occupied a very different position now from that which he had held in the late Parliament. New men had come into the House of Commons, men of integrity and ability, who were above all things advanced Reformers. The position of Mr. Gladstone was markedly changed. He had been defeated at the University of Oxford by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, but was at once put in nomination for South Lancashire, which was still open, and he was elected there. His severance from the University was regarded by Liberals as his political emancipation. The Reformers then would have at their head the two great parliamentary orators (one of them undoubtedly the future Prime Minister), and the greatest philosophical writer and thinker of the day. This Liberal triumvirate, as they were called, would have behind them many new and earnest men, to whom their words would be a law. The alarmed Tories said to themselves that between England and the democratic flood there was left but one barrier, and that was in the person of the old statesman, now in his eighty-first year, of whom more and more doubtful rumours began to arrive in London every day.

## CHAPTER XLVII

## THE DEATH OF LORD PALMERSTON

"UNARM, EROS; the long day's task is done, and we must sleep!" A long, very long, day's task was nearly done. A marvellous career was fast drawing to its close. Down in Hertfordshire Lord Palmerston was dying. As Mirabeau said of himself, so Palmerston might have said, he could already hear the preparations for the funeral of Achilles. He had enjoyed life to the last as fully as ever Churchill did, although in a different sense. Long as his life was, if counted by mere years, it seems much longer still when we consider what it had compassed, and how active it had been from the earliest to the very end. Many men were older than Lord Palmerston; he left more than one senior behind him. But they were for the most part men whose work had long been done; men who had been consigned to the arm-chair of complete inactivity. Palmerston was a hardworking statesman until within a very few days of his death. He had been a member of Parliament for nearly sixty years. He entered Parliament for the first time in the year when Byron, like himself a Harrow boy, published his first poems. He had been in the House of Commons for thirty years when the Queen came to the throne. He used to play chess with the unfortunate Caroline of Brunswick, wife of the Prince Regent, when she lived at Kensington as Princess of Wales. In 1808, being then one of the Lords of the Admiralty, he had defended the Copenhagen expedition of the year before, and insisted that it was a stroke indispensable to the defeat of the designs of Napoleon. During all his political career he was only out of office for rare and brief seasons. To be a private member of Parliament was a short occasional episode in his successful life. In the words of Sadi, the Persian poet, he had obtained an ear of corn from every harvest.

It was only during the session of 1865 that Lord

Palmerston began to give evidence that he was suffering severely at last from that affliction which has been called the most terrible of all diseases—old age. Up to the beginning of that year he had scarcely shown any signs of actual decay. He had, indeed, been for a long time a sufferer from occasional fits of gout, lately in hands as well as feet. During the winter of the *Trent* seizure he had been much disabled and tortured by a visitation of this kind, which almost entirely crippled him. But in this country the gout has long ceased to be an evidence of old age. It only too commonly accompanies middle life; and indeed, like black care in the poet's verse, seems able to cling on to any horseman. But during the session of 1865 Lord Palmerston began to show that he was receiving the warnings which Death, in Mrs. Thrale's pretty poem, is made to give of his coming. He suffered much for some of the later months. His eyesight had become very weak, and even with the help of strong glasses he found it difficult to read. He was getting feeble in every way. He ceased to have that joy of the strife which inspired him during parliamentary debate even up to the attainment of his eightieth year. He had kept up his bodily vigour and the youthful elasticity of his spirits so long, that it must have come on him with the shock of a painful surprise when he first found that his frame and his nerves were beyond doubt giving way, and that he too must succumb to the cruel influence of years. The collapse of his vigour came on almost at a stroke. On his eightieth birthday, in October 1864, he started, Mr. Ashley tells us, "at half past eight from Broadlands, taking his horses by train to Fareham, was met by engineer officers, and rode along the Portsdown and Hilsea lines of forts, getting off his horse and inspecting some of them, crossing over to Anglesey forts and Gosport, and not reaching home till six in the evening." Earlier in the same year he rode one day from his house in Piccadilly to Harrow, trotting the distance of nearly twelve miles within one hour. Such performances testify to an energy of what one would almost call youthful vitality, rare indeed even in the history of our long-living time. But in 1865 the change set in all

at once. Lord Palmerston began to discontinue his attendances at the House; when he did attend, it was evident that he went through his parliamentary duties with difficulty, and even with pain. The Tiverton election on the dissolution of Parliament was his last public appearance. He went from Tiverton to Bocket, in Hertfordshire, a place which Lady Palmerston had inherited from Lord Melbourne, her brother; and there he remained. The gout had become very serious now. It had flown to a dangerous place; and Lord Palmerston had made the danger greater by venturing with his too youthful energy to ride out before he had nearly recovered from one severe attack. On October 17 a bulletin was issued, announcing that Lord Palmerston had been seriously ill, in consequence of having taken cold, but that he had been steadily improving for three days, and was then much better. Somehow this announcement failed to reassure people in London. Many had only then for the first time heard that Palmerston was ill, and the bare mention of the fact fell ominously on the ear of the public. The very next morning these suspicions were confirmed. It was announced that Lord Palmerston's condition had suddenly altered for the worse, and that he was gradually sinking. Then every one knew that the end was near. There was no surprise when the news came next day that Palmerston was dead. He died on October 18. Had he only lived two days longer he would have completed his eighty-first year. He was buried in Westminster Abbey with public honours on October 27. No man since the death of the Duke of Wellington had filled so conspicuous a place in the public mind. No man had enjoyed anything like the same amount of popularity. He died at the moment when that popularity had reached its very zenith. It had become the fashion of the day to praise all he said and all he did. It was the settled canon of the ordinary Englishman's faith that what Palmerston said England must feel. To stand forward as the opponent, or even the critic, of anything done or favoured by him was to be unpopular and unpatriotic. Lord Palmerston had certainly lived long enough in years, in enjoyment, in fame. It seems idle



to ask what might have happened if a man of more than eighty could have lived and held his place in active public life for a few years more. But if one were to indulge in such speculation, the assumption would be that in such an event there must have been some turn in the tide of that almost unparalleled popularity and success. Fortunate in everything during his later years, Lord Palmerston was withdrawn from chance and change just when his fortune had reached its flood.

It is hardly necessary to say that the regret for Palmerston was very general and very genuine. Privately, he can hardly have had any enemies. He had a kindly heart, which won on all people who came near him. He had no enduring enmities or capricious dislikes; and it was therefore very hard for ill-feeling to live in his beaming, friendly presence. He never disliked men merely because he had often to encounter them in political war. He tried his best to give them as good as they brought, and he bore no malice. There were some men whom he disliked, as we have already mentioned in these volumes, but they were men who for one reason or another stood persistently in his way, and who he fancied he had reason to believe had acted treacherously towards him. He liked a man to be "English," and he liked him to be what he considered a gentleman; but he did not restrict his definition of the word "gentleman" to the mere qualifications of birth or social rank. His manners were frank and genial rather than polished; and his is one of the rare instances in which a man contrived always to keep up his personal dignity without any stateliness of bearing and tone. He was a model combatant; when the combat was over, he was ready to sit down by his antagonist's side and be his friend, and talk over their experiences and exploits. He was absolutely free from affectation. This very fact gave sometimes an air almost of roughness to his manners, he could be so plain-spoken and downright when suddenly called on to express his mind. He was not in the highest sense of the word a truthful man; that is to say, there were episodes of his career in which for purposes of statecraft he allowed the House of Commons

and the country to become the dupes of an erroneous impression. Personally truthful and honourable of course it would be superfluous to pronounce him. A man of Palmerston's bringing up is as certain to be personally truthful as he is to be brave, and to be fond of open-air exercise and the cold bath. But Palmerston was too often willing to distinguish between the personal and the political integrity of a statesman. The distinction is common to the majority of statesmen; so much the worse for statesmanship. But the gravest errors of this kind which Palmerston had committed were committed for an earlier generation. The general public of 1865 took small account of them. Not many would have cared much then about the grim story of Sir Alexander Burnes' despatches, or the manner in which Palmerston had played with the hopes of foreign Liberalism, conducting it more than once rather to its grave than to its triumph. These things lived only in the minds of a few at the time when the news of his death came, and even of that few not many were anxious to dwell upon them. It was noticed at the time that the London newspaper which had persistently attacked his policy and himself since the hour when it came into existence, appeared in deep mourning the day after his death. Some thought this show of regret inconsistent; some declared it hypocritical. There is no reason to think it either the one or the other. Without retracting one word of condemnation uttered concerning Palmerston's policy, it was surely natural to feel sincere regret for the death of one who had filled so large a space in the public eye; a man of extraordinary powers, and whose love for his country had never been denied. "Dead! that quits all scores!" is the exclamation of the gipsy in "Guy Mannering"—only a simple untaught version of the "*sunt lachrymæ rerum*" of Virgil, which Fox quoted to explain his feelings when he grieved for the death of the rival whose public actions he could not even at such a moment pretend to approve.

Whether Lord Palmerston belonged to the first order of statesmen can be only matter of speculation and discussion. He was not afforded any opportunity of deciding the

himself; to affect the votes of those to whom he was appealing, not for the sake of expressing any deep irrepressible convictions of his own. He never talked over the heads of his audience, or compelled them to strain their intellects in order to keep pace with his flights. No other statesman of our time could interpose so dexterously just before the division to break the effect of some telling speech against him, and to bring the House into a frame of mind for regarding all that had been done by the Opposition as a mere piece of political ceremonial, gone through in deference to the traditions or the formal necessities of party, on which it would be a waste of time to bestow serious thought. A writer quoted by Mr. Ashley has remarked upon Lord Palmerston's habit "of interjecting occasionally a sort of guttural sound between his words, which must necessarily have been fatal to anything like true oratorical effect, but which somehow seemed to enhance the peculiar effectiveness of his unprepared, easy, colloquial style." The writer goes on to say that this occasional hesitation "often did much to increase the humour of some of the jocular hits in which Lord Palmerston so commonly delighted." "The joke seemed to be so entirely unpremeditated; the audience were kept for a moment in such amusing suspense, while the speaker was apparently turning over the best way to give the hit, that when at last it came it was enjoyed with the keener relish."

Nothing is more rash than to attempt to convey in cold words an idea of the effect which a happy phrase from Lord Palmerston could sometimes produce upon a hesitating audience, and how it could throw ridicule upon a very serious case. Let us, however, make one experiment. Mr. Disraeli had once made a long and heavy attack on the Ministry, opened quite a battery of argument and sarcasm against them for something they had done or had left undone. Towards the close of his speech he observed that it was no part of his duty to suggest to the Ministry the exact course they ought to pursue; he would abstain from endeavouring to influence the House by offering any opinion of his own on that subject. Lord

Palmerston began his reply by seizing on this harmless bit of formality. "The right honourable gentleman," he said, "has declared that he abstained from endeavouring to influence the House by any advice of his own. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that is indeed patriotic." The manner in which Palmerston spoke the words; the peculiar pause before he found the exact epithet with which to commend Mr. Disraeli's conduct; the twinkle of the eye; the tone of the voice—all made this ironical commendation more effective than the finest piece of satire would have been just then. Lord Palmerston managed to put it as if Mr. Disraeli, conscious of the impossibility of his having any really sound advice to offer, had out of combined modesty and love of country deliberately abstained from offering an opinion that might perhaps have misled the ignorant. The effect of Mr. Disraeli's elaborate attack was completely spoilt. The House was no longer in a mood to consider it seriously. This, it may be said, was almost in the nature of a practical joke. Not a few of Palmerston's clever instantaneous effects partook to a certain extent of the nature of a good-humoured practical joke; but Palmerston only had recourse to these oratorical artifices when he was sure that the temper of the House and the condition of the debate would make them serve his momentary purpose. It was hardly better than a mere joke when Palmerston, charged with having acted unfairly in China by first favouring the great rebellion, and then indirectly helping the Chinese Government to put it down, blandly asked what could be more impartial conduct than to help the rebels first and the Government after. It was a mere joke to declare that a member who had argued against Palmerston's scheme of fortifications, had himself admitted the necessity of such a plan by saying that he had taken care to "fortify himself" with facts in order to debate the question. These were not, however, the purely frivolous jests that when thus told they may seem to be. They had all of them the distinct purpose of convincing the House that Lord Palmerston thought nothing of the arguments urged against him; that they did not call for any serious consideration; that a careless jest was the only

way in which it would be worth his while to answer them. It is certain that not only was the opponent, not only were other possible opponents, disconcerted by this way of dealing with the question, but that many listeners became convinced by it that there could be nothing in the case which Lord Palmerston treated with such easy levity. They had all, and more than all, the effect of Pitt's throwing down his pen and ceasing to take notes during Erskine's speech, or O'Connell's smile and amused shake of the head at the earnestness of an ambitious young speaker, who thought he was making a damaging case against him, and compelling a formidable and elaborate reply. The jests of Lord Palmerston always had a purpose in them, and were better adapted to the occasion and the moment than the repartees of the best debater in the House. At one time, indeed, he flung his jests and personalities about in somewhat too reckless a fashion, and he made many enemies. But of late years, whether from growing discretion or kindly feeling, he seldom indulged in any pleasantries that could wound or offend. During his last Parliament he represented to the full the average head and heart of a House of Commons singularly devoid of high ambition or steady purpose; a House peculiarly intolerant of eccentricity, especially if it were that of genius; impatient of having its feelings long strained in any one direction, delighting only in ephemeral interests and excitements; hostile to anything which drew heavily on the energy or the intelligence. Such a House naturally acknowledged a heavy debt of gratitude to the statesman who never either puzzled or bored them. Men who distrusted Mr. Disraeli's antitheses, and were frightened by Mr. Gladstone's earnestness, found as much relief in the easy, pleasant, straightforward talk of Lord Palmerston, as a schoolboy finds in a game of marbles after a problem or a sermon.

We have not now to pronounce upon Lord Palmerston's long career. Much of this "History of Our Own Times" is necessarily the history of the life and administration of a statesman who entered Parliament shortly after Austerlitz. We have commented so far as comment seemed necessary on each passage of his policy as it came under our notice.

His greatest praise with Englishmen must be that he loved England with a sincere love that never abated. He had no predilection, no prejudice, that did not give way where the welfare of England was concerned. He ought to have gone one step higher in the path of public duty ; he ought to have loved justice and right even more than he loved England. He ought to have felt more tranquilly convinced that the cause of justice and of right must be the best thing which an English minister could advance even for England's sake in the end. Lord Palmerston was not a statesman who took any lofty view of a minister's duties. His statesmanship never stood on any high moral elevation. He sometimes did things in the cause of England which we may well believe he would not have done for any consideration in any cause of his own. His policy was necessarily shifting, uncertain, and inconsistent ; for he moulded it always on the supposed interests of England as they showed themselves to his eyes at the time. His sympathies with liberty were capricious guides. Sympathies with liberty must be so always where there is no clear principle defining objects and guiding conduct. Lord Palmerston was not prevented by his Liberal sympathies from sustaining the policy of the *coup d'état* ; nor did his hatred of slavery, one of his few strong and genuine emotions apart from English interests, inspire him with any repugnance to the cause of the Southern slaveholders. But it cannot be doubted that his very defects were a main cause of his popularity and his success. He was able always with a good conscience to assure the English people that they were the greatest and the best, the only good and great, people in the world, because he had long taught himself to believe this, and had come to believe it. He was always popular, because his speeches invariably conveyed this impression to the English crowd whom he addressed in or out of Parliament. Other public men spoke for the most part to tell English people of something they ought to do which they were not doing, something which they had done and ought not to have done. It is not in the nature of things that such men should be as popular as those who told England that whatever she did

must be right. Nor did Palmerston lay on his praise with coarse and palpable artifice. He had no artifice in the matter. He believed what he said, and his very sincerity made it the more captivating and the more dangerous. A phrase sprang up in Palmerston's days which was employed to stigmatise certain political conduct beyond all ordinary reproach. It was meant to stamp such conduct as outside the pale of reasonable argument or patriotic consideration. That was the word "un-English." It was enough with certain classes to say that anything was "un-English" in order to put it utterly out of court. No matter to what principles, higher, more universal, and more abiding than those that are merely English, it might happen to appeal, the one word of condemnation was held to be enough for it. Some of the noblest and the wisest men of our day were denounced as un-English. A stranger might have asked in wonder at one time whether it was un-English to be just, to be merciful, to have consideration for the claims and the rights of others, to admit that there was any higher object in a nation's life than a diplomatic success. All that would have made a man odious and insufferable in private life was apparently held up as belonging to the virtues of the English nation. Rude self-assertion, blunt disregard for the feelings and the claims of others, a self-sufficiency which would regard all earth's interests as made for England's special use alone—the yet more outrageous form of egotism which would fancy that the moral code as it applies to others does not apply to us—all this seemed to be considered the becoming national characteristic of the English people. It would be almost superfluous to say that this did not show its worst in Lord Palmerston himself. As in art, so in politics, we never see how bad some peculiar defect is until we see it in the imitators of a great man's style. A school of Palmerstons, had it been powerful and lasting, would have made England a nuisance to other nations.

Certainly a statesman's first business is to take care of the interests of his own country. His duty is to prefer her interests to those of any other country. In our rough and ready human system he is often compelled to support her

in a policy, the principle of which he did not cordially approve in the first instance. He must do his best to bring her with honour out of a war, even though he would not himself have made or sanctioned the war if the decision had been in his power. He cannot break sharply away from the traditions of his country. Mr. Disraeli often succeeded in throwing a certain amount of disrepute on some of his opponents by calling them the advocates of "cosmopolitanism." If the word had any meaning, it meant, we presume, that the advocates of "cosmopolitanism" were men who had no particular prejudices in favour of their country's interests, and were as ready to take an enemy's side of a question as that of their own people. If there were such politicians—and we have never heard of any such since the execution of Anacharsis Clootz—we could not wonder that their countrymen should dislike them, and draw back from putting any trust in them at a critical moment. They might be held to resemble some of the pragmatists who at one time used to argue that the ties of family are of no account to the truly wise and just, and that a good man should love all his neighbours as well as he loved his wife and children. Such people are hopeless in practical affairs. Taking no account of the very springs of human motive, they are sure to go wrong in everything they try to do or to estimate. An English minister must be an English minister first of all; but he will never be a great minister if he does not in all his policy recognise the truth that there are considerations of higher account for him, and for England too, than England's immediate interests. If he deliberately or heedlessly allows England to do wrong, he will prove an evil counsellor for her; he will do her harm that may be estimated some day even by the most practical and arithmetical calculation. There is a great truth in the fine lines of the cavalier-poet, which remind his mistress that he could not love her so much, loved he not honour more. It is a truth that applies to the statesman as well as to the lover. No man can truly serve his country to the best of his power who has not in his mind all the time a service still higher than that of his country. In many instances Lord Palmerston



allowed England to do things which, if a nation had an individual conscience, he and every one else would say were wrong. It has to be remembered, too, that what is called England's interest comes to be defined according to the minister's personal interpretation of its meaning. The minister who sets the interest of his country above the moral law is necessarily obliged to decide according to his own judgment at the moment what the interests of his country are, and so it is not even the State which is above the moral law, but only the statesman. We have no hesitation in saying that Lord Palmerston's statesmanship on the whole lowered the moral tone of English politics for a time. This consideration alone, if there were nothing else, forbids us to regard him as a statesman whose deeds were equal to his opportunities and to his genius. To serve the purpose of the hour was his policy. To succeed in serving it was his triumph. It is not thus that a great fame is built up, unless, indeed, where the genius of the man is like that of some Cæsar or Napoleon, which can convert its very ruins into monumental records. Lord Palmerston is hardly to be called a great man. Perhaps he may be called a great "man of the time."

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE NEW GOVERNMENT

LORD RUSSELL was invited by the Queen to form a Government after the death of Lord Palmerston. For a few days a certain amount of doubt and speculation prevailed in London and the country generally. It was thought not impossible that, owing to his advanced years, Lord Russell might prove unwilling to take on him the burthen of such an office as that of Prime Minister. The name of Lord Clarendon was suggested by many as that of a probable head of the new administration. Some talked of Lord Granville. Others had a strong conviction that Mr. Gladstone would himself be invited to take that

commanding position in name which he must have in fact. Even when it became certain that Lord Russell was to be the Prime Minister, speculation busied itself as to the possible changes in the administration. Many persuaded themselves that the opportunity would be taken to make some bold and sweeping changes, and to admit the Radical element to an influence in the actual councils of the nation such as it had never enjoyed before, and such as its undoubted strength in Parliament and the country now entitled it to have. According to some rumours, Mr. Bright was to become Secretary for India in the new Cabinet ; according to others, the great free trade orator was to hold the office of President of the Board of Trade, which had once been offered to his friend Mr. Cobden ; and Mr. Mill was to be made Secretary for India. It was soon found, however, that no such novelties were to be announced. The only changes in the Cabinet were that Lord Russell became Prime Minister, and that Lord Clarendon, who had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, succeeded him as Foreign Secretary. One or two new men were brought into offices which did not give a seat in the Cabinet. Among these were Mr. Forster, who became Under Secretary for the Colonies in the room of Mr. Chichester Fortescue, now Irish Secretary, and Mr. Goschen, who succeeded Mr. Hutt as Vice-President of the Board of Trade. Both Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen soon afterwards came to hold high official position, and to have seats in the Cabinet. In each instance the appointment was a concession to the growing Liberal feeling of the day ; but the concession was slight and cautious. The country knew little about either Mr. Forster or Mr. Goschen at the time ; and it will easily be imagined that those who thought a seat in the Cabinet for Mr. Bright was due to the people more even than to the man, and who had some hopes of seeing a similar place offered to Mr. Mill, were not satisfied by the arrangement which called two comparatively obscure men to unimportant office. The outer public did not quite appreciate the difficulties which a Liberal minister had to encounter in compromising between the Whigs and the Radicals. The Whigs included

almost all the members of the party who were really influential by virtue of hereditary rank and noble station. It was impossible to overlook their claims. In a country like England one must pay attention to the wishes of "the Dukes." There is a superstition about it. The man who attempted to form a Liberal Cabinet without consulting the wishes of "the Dukes," would be as imprudent as the Greek commander who in the days of Xenophon would venture on a campaign without consulting the auguries. But it was not only a superstition which required the Liberal Prime Minister to show deference to the claims of the titled and stately Whigs. The great Whig names were a portion of the traditions of the party. More than that, it was certain that whenever the Liberal party got into difficulties, it would look to the great Whig houses to help it out. Many Liberals began to speak with more or less contempt of the Whigs. They talked of these shadows of a mighty name as Thackeray's Barnes Newcome talks of the senior members of his family, his uncle more particularly. But when the Liberal party fell into disorganisation and difficulty some years after, the influence of the great Whig houses was sought for at once in order to bring about an improved condition of things. Liberalism often turns to the Whigs as a young scapegrace to his father or his guardian. The wild youth will have his own way when things are going smooth; when credit is still good, and family affection is not particularly necessary to his comfort. He is even ready enough to smile at old-fashioned ways and antiquated counsels; but when the hour of pressure comes, when obligations have to be met at last, and the gay bachelor lodgings with the fanciful furniture and the other expensive luxuries have to be given up, then he comes without hesitation to the elder, and assumes as a matter of course that his debts are to be paid and his affairs put in order.

Lord Russell had to pay some deference to the authority of the great Whig houses. Some of them probably looked with alarm enough at the one serious change brought about by the death of Lord Palmerston; the change which made Mr. Gladstone leader of the House of Commons. Mean-

while there were some changes in the actual condition of things which did not depend on the mere alteration of a Cabinet. The political complexion of the day was likely to be affected in its colour by some of these changes. The House of Commons, elected just before Lord Palmerston's death, was in many respects a far different House from that which it had been his last ministerial act to dissolve. We have already mentioned some of the changes that death had made. Palmerston was gone, and Cobden, and Sir George Lewis, and Sidney Herbert, and Sir James Graham. There were changes, too, not brought about by death. The Lord John Russell of the Reform Bill had been made a Peer, and sat as Earl Russell in the House of Lords. Mr. Lowe, one of the ablest and keenest of political critics, who had for a while been shut down under the responsibilities of office, was a free-lance once more. Mr. Lowe, who had before that held office two or three times, was Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education from the beginning of Lord Palmerston's Administration until April 1864. At that time a vote of censure was carried against his department, in other words against himself, on the motion of Lord Robert Cecil, for alleged "mutilation" of the reports of the Inspectors of Schools, done, as it was urged, in order to bring the reports into seeming harmony with the educational views entertained by the Committee of Council. Lord Robert Cecil introduced the resolution in a speech singularly bitter and offensive. The motion was carried by a majority of 101 to 93. Mr. Lowe instantly resigned his office; but he did not allow the matter to rest there. He obtained the appointment of a committee to inquire into the whole subject; and the result of the inquiry was not only that Mr. Lowe was entirely exonerated from the charge made against him, but that the resolution of the House of Commons was actually rescinded. It is probable, however, that Mr. Lowe felt that the Government of which he was a member had not given him all the support he might have expected. It is certain that if Lord Palmerston and his leading colleagues had thrown any great energy into their support of him the vote of censure never could have been

carried, and would not have had to be rescinded. This fact was brought back to the memory of many not long after, when Mr. Lowe, still an outsider, became the very Coriolanus of a sudden movement against the Reform policy of a Liberal Government. The vigil of him who treasures up a wrong, if we suppose Mr. Lowe to have had any such feeling, had not to be very long or patient in this instance. On the other hand, Mr. Layard, once a daring and somewhat reckless opponent of Government and governments, a very Drawcansir of political debate, a swashbuckler and soldado of parliamentary conflict, had been bound over to the peace, quietly enmeshed in the discipline of subordinate office. Not Michael Peres himself, the "Copper Captain" of Beaumont and Fletcher, underwent a more remarkable and sudden change when the strong-willed Estifania once had him fast in wedlock, than many a bold and dashing free-lance submits to when he has consented to put himself into the comfortable bondmanship of subordinate office. Mr. Layard was therefore now to be regarded as one subdued in purpose. He seemed what Byron called an "extinct volcano": a happy phrase more lately adopted by Lord Beaconsfield. Yet the volcanic fire was not wholly gone; it flamed up again on opportunity given. Perhaps Mr. Layard proved most formidable to his own colleagues, when he sometimes had to come into the ring to sustain their common cause. The old vigour of the professional gladiator occasionally drove him a little too heedlessly against the Opposition. So combative a temperament found it hard to submit always to the prosaic rigour of mere fact, and the proprieties of official decorum.

The change in the leadership of the House of Commons was of course the most remarkable and the most momentous, of the alterations that had taken place. From Lord Palmerston, admired almost to hero-worship by Whigs and Conservatives, the foremost position had suddenly passed to Mr. Gladstone, whose admirers were the most extreme of the Liberals, and who was distrusted and dreaded by all of Conservative instincts and sympathies, on the one side of the House as well as on the other. Mr. Gladstone and

Mr. Disraeli were now brought directly face to face. One led the House ; the other led the Opposition. With so many points of difference, and even of contrast, there was one slight resemblance in the political situation of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. Each was looked on with a certain doubt and dread by a considerable number of his own followers. It is evident that in such a state of things the strategical advantage lay with the leader of Opposition. He had not to take the initiative in anything, and the least loyal of his followers would cordially serve under him in any effort to thwart a movement made by the Ministry. The Conservatives naturally have always proved the more docile and easily disciplined party. Of late years their policy has necessarily been of a negative character : a policy of resistance or of delay. There is less opportunity for difference of opinion in a party acting with such a purpose than in one of which the principle is to keep pace with changing times and conditions. It came to be seen, however, before long that the Conservative leader was able to persuade his party to accept those very changes against which some of the followers of Mr. Gladstone were found ready to revolt. In order that some of the events to follow may not appear very mysterious, it is well to bear in mind that the formation of the new Ministry under Lord Russell had by no means given all the satisfaction to certain sections of the Liberal party which they believed themselves entitled to expect. Some were displeased because the new Government was not Radical enough. Some were alarmed because they fancied it was likely to go too far for the purpose of pleasing the Radicals. Some were vexed because men whom they looked up to as their natural leaders had not been invited to office. A few were annoyed because their own personal claims had been overlooked. One thing was certain : the Government must make a distinct move of some kind in the direction of Reform. So many new and energetic Liberals and Radicals had entered the House of Commons now that it would be impossible for any Liberal Government to hold office on the terms which had of late been conceded to Lord Palmerston. Mr. Gladstone had always been credited with a sensitive earnestness of temper

which was commonly believed to have given trouble to his more worldly and easy-going colleagues in the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston. He had what Condorcet has happily called an impatient spirit. It was to many people a problem of deep interest to see whether the genius of Mr. Gladstone would prove equal to the trying task of leadership under circumstances of such peculiar difficulty. Tact, according to many, was the quality needed for the work—not genius.

Some new men were coming up on both sides of the political field. They were needed. Many conspicuous figures during former years of debate would be missed when the new Parliament came to meet. Among the new men we have already mentioned Mr. Forster, who had taken a conspicuous part in the debates on the American Civil War. Mr. Forster was a man of considerable parliamentary aptitude; a debater, who though not pretending to eloquence, was argumentative, vigorous, and persuasive. He had practical knowledge of English politics and social affairs, and was thoroughly representative of a very solid body of English public opinion. In the House of Lords the Duke of Argyll was beginning to take a prominent and even a leading place. The Duke of Argyll was still looked upon as a young man in politics. Nothing can be more curious than the manner in which the landmarks of youth and age have of late years been re-arranged in our political life. What would be regarded as approaching to middle-age in ordinary society is now held to be little better than unfledged youth in Parliamentary life. It is doubtful whether any advantages of family influence or personal capacity could in our day enable men to lead a House or a party at the age when Pitt and Fox were accepted political chiefs. Human life should indeed have stretched out almost to what are called patriarchal limits in order to give a political leader now an opportunity of enjoying a fairly proportionate tenure of leadership. The Duke of Argyll would have passed as a middle-aged man in ordinary life, but he was looked on by many as a sort of boy in politics. He had, indeed, begun life very soon. At this time he was some forty-three years of age and he had been a prominent public man for more than twenty years. Lord Houghton, in proposing his health

at a public dinner some years ago, said good-humouredly that "The Duke was only seventeen years old"—(he was in fact nineteen)—"when he wrote a pamphlet called 'Advice to the Peers,' and he has gone on advising us ever since." Pursuing the career of his friend, Lord Houghton went on to say that "soon after he got mixed up with ecclesiastical affairs, and was excommunicated." The ecclesiastical controversy in which the Duke of Argyll engaged so early was the famous struggle concerning the freedom of the Church of Scotland, which resulted in the great secession headed by Dr. Chalmers, and the foundation of the Free Church. Into this controversy the Duke of Argyll, then Marquis of Lorne, rushed with all the energy of Scottish youth, but in it he maintained himself with a good deal of the proverbial Scottish caution. Dr. Chalmers welcomed the young controversialist as an able and important adherent. But the Marquis of Lorne was not prepared to follow the great divine and orator into secession. The heirs to dukedoms in Great Britain seldom go very far in the way of dissent. The Marquis declined to accept the doctrine of Chalmers, that lay patronage and the spiritual independence of the Church were "like oil and water, immiscible." The Free Church movement went on, and the young Marquis drew back. He subsequently vindicated his course, and reviewed the whole question in an essay on the ecclesiastical history of Scotland.

Meanwhile the young controversialist had become Duke of Argyll, on the death of his father in 1847. He did battle in the House of Lords as he had done out of it. He distinguished himself by plunging almost instantaneously into the thick of debate. He very much astonished the staid and formal peers, who had been accustomed to discussion conducted in measured tones, and with awful show of deference to age and political standing. The Duke of Argyll spoke upon any and every subject with astonishing fluency, and without the slightest reverence for years and authority. The general impression of the House of Lords for a long time was that youthful audacity, and nothing else, was the chief characteristic of the Duke of Argyll; and for a long time the Duke of Argyll did a good deal to support



that impression. He had the temerity before he had been very long in the House to make a sharp personal attack upon Lord Derby. The peers were as much astonished as the spectators round the tilt-yard in "Ivanhoe," when they saw the strange young knight strike with his lance's point the shield of the formidable Templar. Lord Derby himself was at first almost bewildered by the unexpected vehemence of his inexperienced opponent. But he soon made up his mind, and bore down upon the Duke of Argyll with all the force of scornful invective which he could summon to his aid. For the hour the Duke of Argyll was as completely overthrown as if he had got in the way of a charge of cavalry. He was in a metaphorical sense left dead on the field. Elderly peers smiled gravely, shook their heads, said they knew how it would be, and congratulated themselves that there was an end of the audacious young debater. But they were quite mistaken. The Duke of Argyll knew of course that he had been soundly beaten, but he did not care. He got up again, and went on just as if nothing had happened. His courage was not broken; his self-confidence moulted no feather. After a while he began to show that there was in him more than self-confidence. The House of Lords found that he really knew a great deal, and had a wonderfully clear head, and they learned to endure his dogmatic and professorial ways; but he never grew to be popular amongst them. His style was far too self-assured; his faith in his own superiority to everybody else was too evident to allow of his having many enthusiastic admirers. He soon, however, got into high office. With his rank, his talents, and his energy, such a thing was inevitable. He joined the Government of Lord Aberdeen in 1852 as Lord Privy Seal, holding an office of dignity, but no special duties, the occupant of which has only to give his assistance in council and general debate. He was afterwards Postmaster-General for two or three years. Under Lord Palmerston, in 1859, he became Lord Privy Seal again, and he retained that office in the Cabinet of Lord Russell.

Mr. Stansfeld was believed to be one of the rising men of the day. He was an advanced Radical, especially known for his sympathies with the movements and the cause of the

more energetic of the Italian leaders. He had made a speech during one of the Reform debates of 1860 which called forth a high compliment from Mr. Disraeli, who was always ready to welcome new ability and promise on whatever side it displayed itself. He had proposed a resolution in favour of reduction of expenditure, when Lord Palmerston was most active in swelling the war costs of the country. The resolution was well supported, and apparently had a fair chance of success, until Lord Palmerston contrived to alarm the House with the idea that if he did not get his way he would resign, and in the eyes of not a few members the resignation of Lord Palmerston appeared to be much the same thing as the coming again of chaos. Mr. Stansfeld became a person of a certain political importance, and in 1863 Lord Palmerston invited him to take office as one of the Lords of the Admiralty. While he held that office an incident occurred which gave rise to a controversy of rather a curious nature. A plot was discovered in Paris for the assassination of the Emperor of the French. The French Government believed, or said they believed, that Mazzini was connected with the plot. Mazzini was a close friend of Mr. Stansfeld, and it appeared was in the habit of having his private letters sent for him under a feigned name to Mr. Stansfeld's house. At the trial of the accused men in Paris, it was stated by the Procureur-Impérial in his speech, that a paper had been found in the possession of one of the prisoners authorising him to write for money to "Mr. Flowers," at the address of Mr. Stansfeld, in London. Now it seemed that Mazzini's letters were sometimes addressed to him as Mr. "Fiori," or Flowers. After what we have already told in this history concerning the opening of Mazzini's letters in the Post Office here, it is not very surprising that Mazzini should prefer not to have his letters addressed to his own name. On these facts, some members of the House of Commons, Liberals as well as Tories, got up a sort of charge against Mr. Stansfeld. Not that any man in his senses seriously believed that Mr. Stansfeld had anything to do with an assassination plot; nor, indeed, that there was any evidence to show that Mazzini was acquainted with the peculiar designs of the accused persons in this case.

Still it seemed a good chance for an attack on the Ministry, through Mr. Stansfeld; and no one could deny that there was a certain amount of indiscretion, not, to say impropriety, in Mr. Stansfeld's good-natured arrangement with Mazzini. A man holding ministerial office, however subordinate, is not warranted in allowing his house to be the receptacle of secret letters for one engaged, like Mazzini, in revolutionary plots against established governments. Mr. Stansfeld felt himself called on to resign his office; and Lord Palmerston, though at first he politely pressed him to reconsider the resolve, consented after a while to accept the resignation. Mr. Stansfeld was sure to be invited to take office again, and the whole episode would probably have been soon forgotten if it were not for one odd incident. During the discussions Mr. Disraeli strongly condemned Mr. Stansfeld for his avowed friendship with Mazzini, and reminded the House of a statement made by Mr. Gallenga, an Italian politician and journalist, to the effect that Mazzini once encouraged him, then a young man of wild and extravagant notions, in a design to kill Charles Albert, King of Sardinia. Mr. Bright came to Mr. Stansfeld's defence in a very kindly and generous speech, made the more effective because of his well-known lack of sympathy with the schemes of revolutionists anywhere. He pointed out that the evidence of Mazzini's distinctly sanctioning regicide was by no means clear, and that Mr. Stansfeld might well be excused if he attached little importance to a story told of Mazzini at such a distant time. Mr. Bright went on good-humouredly to show that high-flown talk about tyrannicide was unfortunately almost a commonplace with a certain class of young rhapsodical political writers, and added that he believed there would be found in a poem called "A Revolutionary Epick," written by Mr. Disraeli himself some five-and-twenty or thirty years before, certain lines of eloquent apostrophe in praise of the slaying of tyrants. Mr. Disraeli rose at once, and with some warmth denied that any such sentiment, or any words suggesting it, could be found in the poem. Mr. Bright, of course, accepted the assurance. He explained that he had never seen the poem himself, but had been positively informed that it contained such a passage, and he

withdrew the statement with a handsome apology. Every one supposed the matter would have dropped there. The "Revolutionary Epick" was a piece of metrical bombast, published by Mr. Disraeli a generation before, and forgotten by almost all the living. Mr. Disraeli declared that he attached great importance to the charge made against him, and that he felt bound to refute it by more than a mere denial. He published a new edition of the poem, which he dedicated to Lord Stanley, in order to settle the controversy. "I have, therefore, thought it," he explains, "the simplest course, and one which might save me trouble hereafter, to publish the 'Revolutionary Epick.' It is printed from the only copy in my possession, and which, with slight exceptions, was corrected in 1837, when after three years' reflection I had resolved not only to correct but to complete the work. The corrections are purely literary." The poem thus republished seemed more a literary curiosity than a work of art. It had a preface which was positively grotesque in its grandiloquence. "It was on the plains of Troy," the writer informed the world, "that I first conceived the idea of this work." On that interesting spot it seems to have occurred to him for the first time that "the most heroick incident of an heroick age produced in the Iliad an Heroick Epick; thus the consolidation of the most superb of empires produced in the Æneid a Political Epick; the revival of learning and the birth of vernacular genius presented us in the Divine Comedy with a National Epick; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a religious Epick." Then the author naturally was led to ask, should the spirit of his time "alone be uncelebrated?" As naturally came the answer, that the spirit of Mr. Disraeli's time ought to be celebrated; and that Mr. Disraeli was the man to celebrate it. "Standing upon Asia and gazing upon Europe," the inspiration descended on him. "For me," he exclaimed, "remains the Revolutionary Epick." There was so much of the youth, not to say of the schoolboy, in these bursts of extraordinary eloquence, that no one could have thought of making any serious accusation against Mr. Disraeli in his graver days, even if the pages of such a poem had been

enlivened by some nonsense about tyrannicide. The work, as reprinted, certainly contained no passage to show that the young writer entertained any such opinions. Unfortunately, it was found that in the republication the questionable passages had somehow undergone a process of alteration. Very few copies of the original edition were in existence. But the British Museum treasured one, and from this it was found that the new version was not quite the same as the original. Thus in the new edition, published specially for the purpose of repelling the charge about tyrannicide, the lines about Brutus were very harmless :—

Rome's strong career  
Was mine ; the blow bold Brutus struck, her fate.

But in the original edition it ran thus to a much more audacious note :—

The spirit of her strong career was mine ;  
And the bold Brutus but propelled the blow  
Her own and nature's laws alike approved.

There were other slight modifications, too, into which it is not necessary to enter. Enough has been said to show that by what we must suppose to have been some unlucky accident, Mr. Disraeli came to publish as a final and complete refutation of the charge founded upon his "Revolutionary Epick," a version of that work which was altered from the original in several passages, and in the passage most important of all. We have spoken of a charge made against Mr. Disraeli ; but that is giving by far too serious a name to the good-humoured statement made by Mr. Bright. Neither Mr. Bright, nor any one else, supposed for a moment that Mr. Disraeli ever seriously approved of regicide. Neither Mr. Bright, nor any one else, would have thought of holding Mr. Disraeli gravely responsible for some youthful rhodomontades published in a forgotten attempt at poetry. All that Mr. Bright apparently meant to say was : "Don't be too rigid in censuring the incautious utterances of men's early and foolish years. Did not you yourself, in a poem published thirty years ago, talk some nonsense about nature's approval of tyrannicide?" The

only seriousness given to the matter was when Mr. Disraeli published a new edition for the purpose of finally repudiating the charge, and the new edition was found to have the peculiar passages altered. That was unlucky. If Mr. Disraeli printed from the only copy in his possession, which he had corrected after three years' reflection, it still was a pity he did not leave the disputed passages uncorrected, or restore them to their original shape. The question was not whether after three years' reflection Mr. Disraeli was entitled to alter in 1837 what he had published in 1834. The question was only as to what he had published in 1834. Nor is it easy to understand how, considering what the controversy was about, he could have regarded the corrections as purely literary. We are bound to say, that the incident did Mr. Disraeli no particular harm. The English public has always been curiously unwilling to take Mr. Disraeli seriously. The great majority laughed at the whole thing and made no further account of it.

There were some rising men on the Tory side. Sir Hugh Cairns, afterwards Lord Chancellor and a peer, had fought his way by sheer talent and energy into the front rank of Opposition. A lawyer from Belfast, and the son of middle-class parents, he had risen into celebrity and influence while yet he was in the very prime of life. He was a lawyer whose knowledge of his own craft might fairly be called profound. He was one of the most effective debaters in Parliament. His resources of telling argument were almost inexhaustible, and his training at the bar gave him the faculty of making the best at the shortest notice of all the facts he was able to bring to bear on any question of controversy. He showed more than once that he was capable of pouring out an animated and even a passionate invective. An orator in the highest sense he certainly was not. No gleam of imagination softened or brightened his lithe and nervous logic. No deep feeling animated and inspired it. His speeches were arguments not eloquence; instruments not literature. But he was on the whole the greatest political lawyer since Lyndhurst; and he was probably a sounder lawyer than Lyndhurst. He had above all things skill and discretion. He could do much for the

aboriginal Tories, if we may use such a word, which they could not do of or for themselves; and his appearance in the front rank of Conservatism made it much more formidable than it was before. Like Mr. Disraeli himself, Sir Hugh Cairns was an important auxiliary of Toryism. The Conservative party had always to retain their foreign legion, as the French kings had their Scottish archers, their Swiss guard, or their Irish brigade. In the House of Commons there were very few genuine English Tories capable of sustaining with Mr. Disraeli the brunt of debate. The Conservative leader's most effective adjutants were men like Sir Hugh Cairns, an Irish lawyer; Mr. Whiteside, a voluble, eloquent, sometimes rather boisterous speaker, also an Irishman and a lawyer; Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald, a clever Irishman, who had at least been called to the bar. Sir Stafford Northcote was a man of ability, who had an excellent financial training under no less a teacher than Mr. Gladstone himself. But Sir Stafford Northcote, although a fluent speaker, was not a great debater, and moreover he had but little of the genuine Tory in him. He was a man of far too modern a spirit and training to be a genuine Tory. He was not one whit more Conservative than most of the Whigs. Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook, was a man of ingrained Tory instincts rather than convictions. He was a powerful speaker of the rattling declamatory kind; fluent as the sand in an hour-glass is fluent; stirring as the roll of a drum is stirring; sometimes dry as the sand and empty as the drum. A man of far higher ability and of really great promise was Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Cranborne, and now Marquis of Salisbury. Lord Robert Cecil was at this time the ablest scion of noble Toryism in the House of Commons. He was younger than Lord Stanley, and he had not Lord Stanley's solidity, caution, or political information. But he had more originality; he had brilliant ideas; he was ready in debate; and he had a positive genius for saying bitter things in the bitterest tone. The younger son of a great peer, he had at one time no apparent chance of succeeding to the title and the estates. He had accepted honourable poverty, and was glad to help out his means by

the use of his very clever pen. He wrote in several publications, it was said; especially in the *Quarterly Review*, the time-honoured and somewhat time-worn organ of Toryism; and after a while certain political articles in the *Quarterly* came to be identified with his name. He was an ultra-Tory; a Tory on principle, who would hear of no compromise. One great object of his political writings appeared to be to denounce Mr. Disraeli, his titular leader, and to warn the party against him. For a long time he was disliked by most persons in the House of Commons. His gestures were ungainly; his voice was singularly unmusical and harsh; and the extraordinary and wanton bitterness of his tongue set the ordinary listeners against him. He seemed to take a positive delight in being gratuitously offensive. One night during the session of 1862 he attacked Mr. Gladstone's financial policy and likened it to the practice of "a pettifogging attorney." This was felt to be somewhat coarse, and there were many murmurs of disapprobation. Lord Robert Cecil cared as little for disapprobation or decorum as the son of Tisander in the story told by Herodotus, and he went on with his speech unheeding. Next night, when the debate was resumed, Lord Robert rose and said he feared he had on the previous evening uttered some words which might give offence, and which he felt that he could not justify. There were murmurs of encouraging applause; the House of Commons admires nothing more than an unsolicited and manly apology. He had, Lord Robert went on to say, compared the policy of Mr. Gladstone to the practice of a pettifogging attorney. That was language which on cooler consideration he felt he ought not to have used, and therefore he begged leave to tender his sincere apology—to the attorneys. There was something so wanton, something so nearly approaching to mere buffoonery in conduct like this, that many men found themselves unable to recognise the really high intellectual qualities that were hidden behind that curious mask of offensive cynicism. Lord Robert Cecil, therefore, although a genuine Tory, or perhaps because he was a genuine Tory, could not as yet be looked upon as a man likely to render great service to



his party. He was just as likely to turn against them at some moment of political importance. He would not fall in with the discipline of the party; he would not subject his opinions or his caprices to its supposed interests. He was not made to swear in the words of the leader who then guided the party in the House of Commons. Some men on his own side of the House disliked him. Many feared him; some few admired him; no one regarded him as a trustworthy party man. At this period of its career, as at almost all others, Toryism, as a parliamentary party, lived and won its occasional successes by the guidance and the services of brilliant outsiders. Had it been left to the leadership of genuine Tories it would probably have come to an end long before. At this particular time to which we have now conducted it, it lived and looked upon the earth, had hope of triumph and gains, had a present and a future, only because it allowed itself to be led by men whom it sometimes distrusted; whom, according to some of its own legitimate princelings, it ought always to have disavowed.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### THE TROUBLES IN JAMAICA

DEMOSTHENES once compared the policy of the Athenians to the manner in which a barbarian boxes. When the barbarian receives a blow his attention is at once turned to the part which has got the stroke, and he hastens to defend it. When he receives another blow in another place his hand is there just too late to stop it. But he never seems to have any idea beforehand of what he is to expect or whither his attention ought to be directed. The immense variety of imperial, foreign, and colonial interests that England has got involved in compels a reader of English history, and indeed often compels an English statesman, to find himself in much the same condition as this barbarian boxer. It is impossible to know from

moment to moment whither the attention will next have to be turned. Lord Russell's Government had hardly come into power before they found themselves compelled to illustrate this truth. They had scarcely been installed when it was found that some troublesome business awaited them, and that the trouble as usual had arisen in a wholly unthought-of quarter. For some weeks there was hardly anything talked of, we might almost say hardly anything thought of, in England, but the story of the rebellion that had taken place in the island of Jamaica, and the manner in which it had been suppressed and punished. The first story came from English officers and soldiers who had themselves helped to crush or to punish the supposed rebellion. All that the public here could gather from the first narratives that found their way into print was, that a negro insurrection had broken out in Jamaica, and that it had been promptly crushed; but that its suppression seemed to have been accompanied by a very carnival of cruelty on the part of the soldiers and their volunteer auxiliaries. Some of the letters sent home reeked with blood. Every writer seemed anxious to accredit himself with the most monstrous deeds of cruelty. Accounts were given of *battues* of negroes as if they had been game. Englishmen told with exulting glee of the number of floggings they had ordered or inflicted; of the huts they had burnt down; of the men and women they had hanged. "I visited," wrote an English officer to his superior, "several estates and villages. I burnt seven houses in all, but did not even see a rebel. On returning to Golden Grove in the evening, sixty-seven prisoners had been sent in by the Maroons. I disposed of as many as possible, but was too tired to continue after dark. On the morning of the 24th, I started for Morant Bay, having first flogged four and hung six rebels. I beg to state that I did not meet a single man upon the road up to Keith Hall; there were a few prisoners here, all of whom I flogged, and then proceeded to Johnstown and Beckford. At the latter place I burned seven houses and one meeting-house; in the former four houses." Another officer writes: "We made a raid with thirty men; flogging nine men and burning their negro houses. We

held a court-martial on the prisoners, who amounted to about fifty or sixty. Several were flogged without court-martial, from a simple examination." Then the writer quietly added: "This is a picture of martial law. The soldiers enjoy it; the inhabitants here dread it. If they run on their approach, they are shot for running away." It will be seen that in these letters there is no question of contending with or suppressing an insurrection. The insurrection, such as it was, had been suppressed. The writers only give a description of a sort of hunting expedition among the negro inhabitants for the purpose of hanging and flogging. The soldiers are pictured as enjoying the work; the inhabitants, strange to say, are observed to dread it. Their dread would seem to have been unfortunate, although certainly not unnatural; for if they ran away at the approach of the soldiers, the soldiers shot them for their want of confidence. It also became known that a coloured member of the Jamaica House of Assembly, a man named George William Gordon, who was suspected of inciting the rebellion, and had surrendered himself at Kingston, was put on board an English war vessel there, taken to Morant Bay, where martial law had been proclaimed, tried by a sort of drumhead court-martial, and instantly hanged.

Such news naturally created a profound sensation in England. The Aborigines' Protection Society, the Anti-Slavery Society, and other philanthropic bodies, organised a deputation, immense in its numbers, and of great influence as regarded its composition, to wait on Mr. Cardwell, Secretary for the Colonies, at the Colonial Office, and urge on him the necessity of instituting a full inquiry and recalling Governor Eyre. The deputation was so numerous that it had to be received in a great public room, and indeed the whole scene was more like that presented by some large popular meeting than by a deputation to a minister. Mr. Cardwell was so fortunate as to discover a phrase exactly suitable to the occasion. In the course of his reply to the deputation, he laid it down that every one must be careful not to "prejudge" the question. It was pointed out to him that it can hardly be called prejudging if you

take men's own formal and official statements of what they have done, and declare that on their own acknowledgments you are of opinion they have done wrong. The word "prejudge" carried thousands of uncertain minds along with it. All over the country there was one easy form of protest against the proceedings of the philanthropic societies. It was apparently enough to utter the oracular words "we must not prejudge." Mr. Cardwell, however, did so far prejudge the case himself as to suspend Mr. Eyre temporarily from his functions as Governor, and to send out a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the whole history of the rebellion and the repression, and to report to the Government. Sir Henry Storks, a man of great ability and high reputation, both as soldier and administrator, who had been Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, was summoned from Malta, where he was then Governor and Commander-in-Chief, to take the Governorship of Jamaica for the time, and to act as President of the Commission. He had associated with him Mr. Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, a lawyer of high standing and a distinguished member of Parliament; and Mr. J. B. Maule, Recorder of Leeds. The philanthropic associations which had taken up the question, sent out two barristers to act as counsel for the widowed Mrs. Gordon during the investigation: Mr. Gorrie, afterwards Chief Justice of the Fiji Islands, and Mr. J. Horne Payne. The Commission held a very long and careful inquiry. No one could question either the ability or the impartiality of the Commissioners. There was a general disposition to receive any report they might make as authoritative and decisive. Meanwhile there was no disposition to wait for the story of all that had happened until the Commission should have got through its patient inquiries and presented its formal report. The English public have long learned to look to the newspaper press as not only the quickest, but on the whole the most accurate, source of intelligence in all matters of public interest. In this case as in most others, the newspapers differed in their judgment as to the conduct of the principal actors in the drama; but, in this case, as in all others of late years, each newspaper

endeavoured to give a correct representation of the facts. Many wild exaggerations had found their way into some newspapers. These came from private letters. It sometimes happened that men who had been engaged in putting down the insurrection, represented themselves as having done deeds of savage vengeance of which they were not really guilty. In some instances it actually turned out that Mr. Cardwell's appeal to the public not to prejudge was warranted even where men deliberately affirmed themselves to have committed the acts which made people at home shudder and exclaim. Such seemed to have been the fervour of repression in Jamaica, that persons were found eager to claim an undue share of its honours by ascribing to themselves detestable excesses which in point of fact they had not committed. It is needless to say that there was exaggeration on the other side, and that affrighted coloured people in Jamaica sent forth wild rumours of wholesale massacre which would have been impossible, even in the high fever of repression. As the letters of the accredited correspondents of the newspapers began to arrive, the true state of affairs gradually disclosed itself. There was no substantial discrepancy as to the facts; and the report of the Commissioners themselves, when it was received, did not add much to the materials for forming a judgment which the public already possessed, nor probably did it alter many opinions of many men. The history of the events in Jamaica, told in whatever way, must form a sad and shocking narrative. The history of this generation has no such tale to tell where any race of civilised and Christian men is concerned. Had the repression been justifiable in all its details; had the fearful vengeance taken on the wretched island been absolutely necessary to its future tranquillity, it still would have been a chapter of history to read with a shudder. It will be seen, however, that excesses were committed which could not possibly plead the excuse of necessity; that some deeds were done which most moralists would say no human authority could warrant, or human peril justify.

Jamaica had long been in a more or less disturbed condition; at least it had long been liable to periodical fits

of disturbance. We have already described in this history some of the difficulties occasioned by the condition of things existing in the island. When giving an account of the Jamaica Bill during the Melbourne administration, it was mentioned that the troubles then existing were in fact a survival of the slave system. So were the troubles of 1865. "I suppose there is no island or place in the world," said Chief Justice Cockburn in his celebrated charge to the grand jury at the Central Criminal Court, in 1867, "in which there has been so much of insurrection and disorder as the island of Jamaica. There is no place in which the curse which attaches to slavery, both as regards the master and the slave, has been more strikingly illustrated." What we may call the planter class still continued to look on the negroes as an inferior race hardly entitled to any legal rights. The negroes were naturally only too ready to listen to any denunciations of the planter class, and to put faith in any agitation which promised to secure them property in the land. The negroes had undoubtedly serious grievances. It may be that some of the wrongs they complained of were imaginary or were exaggerated. But it is a very safe rule in politics to assume that no population is ever disturbed by wholly imaginary grievances. In such cases, unquestionably, where there is smoke there is fire. Man is by far too lazy an animal to trouble himself much with agitation about purely unreal and non-existing wrongs. The negroes of Jamaica had very substantial wrongs. They constantly complained that they could not get justice administered to them when any dispute arose between white and black. The Government had found that there was some ground for complaints of this kind at the time when it was proposed by the Jamaica Bill to suspend the constitution of the island. Perhaps if the Melbourne Ministry had been stronger and inspired by greater earnestness of purpose at that time, the calamities and shames of 1865 might have been avoided. In 1865, however, the common causes of dissatisfaction were freshly and further complicated by a dispute about what were called the "back lands." This was a question which might under certain circumstances have arisen in Ireland; at

least it will be easily understood by those who are acquainted with the condition of Ireland. Lands belonging to some of the great estates in Jamaica, had been allowed to run out of cultivation. They were so neglected by their owners that they were turning into mere bush. The quit-rents due on them to the Crown had not been paid for seven years. The negroes were told that if they paid the arrears of quit-rent they might cultivate these lands and enjoy them free of rent. It may be remarked that the tendency in Jamaica had almost always hitherto been for the Crown officials to take the part of the negroes, and for the Jamaica authorities to side with the local magnates. Trusting to the assurance given, some of the negroes paid the arrears of quit-rent, and brought the land into cultivation. The agent of one of the estates, however, reasserted the right of his principal, who had not been a consenting party to the arrangement, and he endeavoured to evict the negro occupiers of the land. The negroes resisted, and legal proceedings were instituted to turn them out. The legal proceedings were still pending when the events took place which gave occasion to so much controversy. Jamaica was in an unquiet state. "Within the land," as in the territory of the chiefs round Lara's castle, "was many a malcontent, who cursed the tyranny to which he bent." There, too, "Frequent broil within had made a path for blood and giant sin, that waited but a signal to begin new havoc such as civil discord blends." On October 7, 1865, some disturbances took place on the occasion of a magisterial meeting at Morant Bay, a small town on the south-east corner of the island. The negroes appeared to be in an excited state, and many persons believed that an outbreak was at hand. An application was made to the Governor for military assistance. The Governor of Jamaica was Mr. Edward John Eyre, who had been a successful explorer in Central, West, and Southern Australia, had acted as resident magistrate and protector of aborigines in the region of the Lower Murray in Australia, and had afterwards been Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand, of the Leeward Islands, and of other places. All Mr. Eyre's dealings with native races up to this time would seem to

have earned for him the reputation of a just and humane man. The Governor despatched a small military force by sea to the scene of the expected disturbances. Warrants had been issued meanwhile by the Custos or chief magistrate of the parish in which Morant Bay is situated, for the arrest of some of the persons who had taken part in the previous disturbances—which it may be stated had for their object the rescue of a man on trial for a trifling offence. When the warrants were about to be put into execution, resistance by force was offered. In particular, the attempt to arrest a leading negro agitator, named Paul Bogle, was strenuously and successfully opposed. The police were overpowered, and some were beaten, and others compelled to swear that they would not interfere with the negroes. On the 11th the negroes, armed with sticks, and the “cutlasses” used in the work of the sugar-cane fields, assembled in considerable numbers in the square of the Court House in Morant Bay. The magistrates were holding a meeting there. The mob made for the Court House; the local volunteer force came to the help of the magistrates. The Riot Act was being read when some stones were thrown. The volunteers fired, and some negroes were seen to fall. Then the rioters attacked the Court House. The volunteers were few in number, and were easily overpowered; the Court House was set on fire; eighteen persons, the Custos among them, were killed, and about thirty were wounded; and a sort of incoherent insurrection suddenly spread itself over the neighbourhood. The moment, however, that the soldiers sent by the Governor, at first only one hundred in number, arrived upon the scene of disturbance, the insurrection collapsed and vanished. There never was the slightest attempt made by the rioters to keep the field against the troops. The soldiers had not in a single instance to do any fighting. The only business left to them was to hunt out supposed rebels, and bring them before military tribunals. So evanescent was the whole movement that it is to this day a matter of dispute whether there was any rebellion at all, properly so called; whether there was any organised attempt at insurrection; or whether the



disturbances were not the extemporaneous work of a discontented and turbulent mob, whose rush to rescue some of their friends expanded suddenly into an effort to wreak old grievances on the nearest representatives of authority.

On October 13, the Governor proclaimed the whole of the county of Surrey, with the exception of the city of Kingston, under martial law. Jamaica is divided into three counties ; Surrey covering the eastern and southern portion, including the region of the Blue Mountains, the towns of Port Antonio and Morant Bay, and the considerable city of Kingston, with its population of some thirty thousand. Middlesex comprehends the central part of the island, and contains Spanish Town, then the seat of Government. The western part of the island is the county of Cornwall. At this time Jamaica was ruled by the Governor and Council, and the House of Assembly. The Council was composed of twelve persons, nominated, like the Governor, by the Crown ; and the House of Assembly consisted of forty-five members elected by the freeholders of each parish. The Council had the place of an Upper House ; the Assembly was the Representative Chamber. Among the members of the Assembly was a coloured man of some education and property, George William Gordon. Gordon was a Baptist by religion, and had in him a good deal of the fanatical earnestness of the field-preacher. He was a vehement agitator and a devoted advocate of what he considered to be the rights of the negroes. He appears to have had a certain amount of eloquence, partly of the conventicle and partly of the stump. He was just the sort of man to make himself a nuisance to white colonists and officials who wanted to have everything their own way. Indeed, he belonged to that order of men who are almost sure to be always found in opposition to officialism of any kind. Such a man may do mischief sometimes, but it is certain that out of his very restlessness and troublesomeness he often does good. No really sensible politician would like to see a Legislative Assembly of any kind without some men of the type of Gordon representing the check of perpetual opposition. On the other hand, Gordon was exactly the sort of

person in the treatment of whom a wise authority would be particularly cautious, in order not to allow its own prejudices to operate to his injury and the injury of political justice together. Gordon was in constant disputes with the authorities, and with Governor Eyre himself. He had been a magistrate, but was dismissed from the magistracy in consequence of the alleged violence of his language in making accusations against another justice. He had taken part in getting up meetings of the coloured population ; he had made many appeals to the Colonial Office in London against this or that act on the part of the Governor or the Council, or both. He had been appointed churchwarden, but was declared disqualified for the office in consequence of his having become a "Native Baptist" ; and he had brought an action to recover what he held to be his rights. He had come to hold the position of champion of the rights and claims of the black man against the white. He was a sort of constitutional Opposition in himself. The Governor seems to have at once adopted the conclusion urged on him by others, that Gordon was at the bottom of the insurrectionary movement. In the historical sense he may no doubt be regarded as in some measure the cause of the disturbance, whether insurrectionary or not, which broke out. A man who tells people they are wronged is to that extent the cause of any disturbance which may come of an attempt to get their wrongs righted. A great many persons declared that Fox was the author of the Irish rebellion of 1798, because he had helped to show that the Irish people had wrongs. In this sense every man who agitates for reform anywhere is responsible should any rebellious movement take place ; and the only good citizen is he who approves of all that is done by authority, and never uplifts the voice of opposition to anything. Gordon was a very energetic agitator, and he probably had sense of self-importance in his agitation ; but we entirely agree with Chief Justice Cockburn in believing that "so far from there being any evidence to prove that Mr. Gordon intended this insurrection and rebellion, the evidence, as well as the probability of the case, appears to be exactly the other way." There does not seem to have been one particle of evidence to

connect Gordon with a rebellious movement more than there would have been to condemn Mr. Bright as a promoter of rebellion, if the working men of the Reform period, soon to be mentioned in this history, had been drawn into fatal conflict with the police. In each case it might have been said that only for the agitator who denounced the supposed grievance all would have been quiet ; and in neither case was there anything more to be said which could connect the agitator with the disturbance. Mr. Eyre and his advisers, however, had made up their minds that Gordon was the leader of a rebellious conspiracy. They took a course with regard to him which could hardly be excused if he were the self-confessed leader of as formidable a conspiracy as ever endangered the safety of a State.

We have mentioned the fact that, in proclaiming the county of Surrey under martial law, Mr. Eyre had specially excepted the city of Kingston. Mr. Gordon lived near Kingston, and had a place of business in the city ; and he seems to have been there attending to his business, as usual, during the days while the disturbances were going on. The Governor ordered a warrant to be issued for Gordon's arrest. When this fact became known to Gordon, he went to the house of the General in command of the Forces at Kingston and gave himself up. The Governor had him put at once on board a war steamer, and conveyed to Morant Bay. Having given himself up in a place where martial law did not exist, where the ordinary courts were open, and where, therefore, he would have been tried with all the forms and safeguards of the civil law, he was purposely carried away to a place which had been put under martial law. Here an extraordinary sort of court-martial was sitting. It was composed of two young navy lieutenants and an ensign in one of her Majesty's West India regiments. Gordon was hurried before this grotesque tribunal, charged with high treason, found guilty, and sentenced to death. The sentence was approved by the officer in command of the troops sent to Morant Bay. It was then submitted to the Governor, and approved by him also. It was carried into effect without much delay. The day following Gordon's conviction was Sunday, and it was not thought

seemly to hang a man on the Sabbath. He was allowed, therefore, to live over that day. On the morning of Monday, October 23, Gordon was hanged. He bore his fate with great heroism, and wrote just before his death a letter to his wife, which is full of pathos in its simple and dignified manliness. He died protesting his innocence of any share in disloyal conspiracy or insurrectionary purpose.

The whole of the proceedings connected with the trial of Gordon were absolutely illegal: they were illegal from first to last. It is almost impossible to conceive of any transaction more entirely unlawful. Every step in it was a separate outrage on law. But for its tragic end the whole affair would seem to belong to the domain of burlesque rather than to that of sober history. The act which conveyed Mr. Gordon from the protection of civil law to the authority of a drumhead court-martial was grossly illegal. The tribunal was constituted in curious defiance of law and precedent. It is contrary to all authority to form a court-martial by mixing together the officers of the two different services. It was an unauthorised tribunal, however, even if considered as only a military court-martial, or only a naval court-martial. Whatever way we take it, it was irregular and illegal. It would have been so had all its members been soldiers, or had all been sailors. Care seemed to have been taken so to constitute it that it must in any case be illegal. The prisoner thus brought by unlawful means before an illegal tribunal was tried upon testimony taken in ludicrous opposition to all the rules of evidence. Chief Justice Cockburn says: "After the most careful perusal of the evidence which was adduced against him, I come irresistibly to the conclusion that if the man had been tried upon that evidence"—and here the Chief Justice checked himself and said: "I must correct myself. He could not have been tried upon that evidence. I was going too far, a great deal too far, in assuming that he could. He could not have been tried upon that evidence. No competent judge acquainted with the duties of his office could have received that evidence. Three-fourths, I had almost said nine-tenths, of the evidence upon which that man was convicted and sentenced to death, was evidence which,

according to no known rules—not only of ordinary law, but of military law—according to no rules of right or justice could possibly have been admitted; and it never would have been admitted if a competent judge had presided, or if there had been the advantage of a military officer of any experience in the practice of courts-martial.” Such as the evidence was, however, compounded of scraps of the paltriest hearsay, and of things said when the prisoner was not present; of depositions made apparently to supplement evidence given before, and not thought strong enough; strengthened probably in the hope of thus purchasing the safety of the witnesses, and on which the witnesses were never cross-examined—such as the evidence was, supposing it admissible, supposing it trustworthy, supposing it true beyond all possibility of question, yet the Chief Justice was convinced that it testified rather to the innocence than to the guilt of the prisoner. By such a court, on such evidence, Gordon was put to death.

Meanwhile the carnival of repression was going on. The insurrection, or whatever the movement was which broke out on October 11, was over long before. It never offered the slightest resistance to the soldiers. It never showed itself to them. An armed insurgent was never seen by them. Nevertheless, for weeks after, the hangings, the floggings, the burnings of houses were kept up. Men were hanged, women were flogged merely “suspect of being suspect.” Many were flogged or hanged for no particular reason but that they happened to come in the way of men who were in a humour for flogging and hanging. Women—to be sure they were only coloured women—were stripped and scourged by the saviours of society with all the delight which a savage village population of the Middle Ages might have felt in torturing witches. The report of the Royal Commissioners stated that 439 persons were put to death, and that over six hundred, including many women, were flogged, some under circumstances of revolting cruelty. Cats made of piano-wire were in some instances used for the better effect of flagellation. Some of the scourges were shown to the Commissioners, who observe that it is “painful to think that any man should have used such an instrument

for the torturing of his fellow-creatures." The Commissioners summed up their Report by declaring that the punishments inflicted were excessive; that the "punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent; that the floggings were reckless, and in some cases positively barbarous; that the burning of one thousand houses was wanton and cruel." The fury at last spent itself. *Lassata necdum satiata.*

When the story reached England in clear and trustworthy form, two antagonistic parties were instantly formed. The extreme on one side glorified Governor Eyre, and held that by his prompt action he had saved the white population of Jamaica from all the horrors of triumphant negro insurrection. The extreme on the other side denounced him as a mere fiend. The majority on both sides were more reasonable; but the difference between them was only less wide. An association called the Jamaica Committee was formed for the avowed purpose of seeing that justice was done. It comprised some of the most illustrious Englishmen. Men became members of that committee who had never taken part in public agitation of any kind before. Another association was founded, on the opposite side, for the purpose of sustaining Governor Eyre, and it must be owned that it too had great names. Mr. Mill may be said to have led the one side, and Mr. Carlyle the other. The natural bent of each man's genius and temper turned him to the side of the Jamaica negroes, or of the Jamaica Governor. Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Ruskin, followed Mr. Carlyle; we know now that Mr. Dickens was of the same way of thinking. Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Mr. Goldwin Smith, were in agreement with Mr. Mill. We have purposely omitted the names of politicians, whom any reader can range without difficulty according to his knowledge of their career and ways of thinking. No one needs to be told that Mr. Bright took the side of the oppressed, and Mr. Disraeli that of authority. The case on either side may be briefly stated. We put out of consideration altogether the position taken up by only too many of those who proclaimed themselves advocates of Mr. Eyre, and who volunteered a line of defence on his behalf for which he would probably have given them little

thanks. That was what some one at the time in blunt expressive words described as the "damned nigger" principle; the principle that any sort of treatment is good enough for negroes, and generally speaking serves them right. This kind of argument was very effective among considerable classes of persons, but it was not allowed to make its appearance much in public debate. In the House of Commons it never, at all events, got higher than the smoking-room; the reporters in the gallery were not allowed any opportunity of recording it. Perhaps, on the other side, we may fairly put out of our consideration the view of those who, having from the most benevolent motives identified themselves all their lives long with the cause of oppressed negroes, fell instinctively and at once into the ranks of any movement professing to defend a negro population. The more reasonable of those who supported Mr. Eyre did not concern themselves to vindicate the legality or even the justice of all that he had done. Lord Carnarvon, the new Colonial Secretary, frankly admitted that in his opinion acts of cruelty and injustice had been done during and after the rebellion. Many were quite willing to admit that the trial of Gordon had been irregular, and that his hasty execution was to be deplored. What they did contend was, that at a terrible crisis Mr. Eyre did the best he could; that he was confronted with the fearful possibility of a negro insurrection, where the whites were not one in twenty of the blacks, and where a moment's success to the rebels might have put the life of every white man, and the honour of every white woman, at the mercy of furious mobs of savage negroes. "Say what you will," they urged, "he stamped out the rebellion. He acted illegally, because there was no time for being legal. He sanctioned unmerciful deeds, because he had to choose between mercy to murderous blacks and mercy to loyal and innocent whites. You complain of the flogging of black women; he was thinking of the honour and lives of white women. He crushed the rebellion utterly; he positively frightened it into submission. He was dealing with savages; he took the only steps which could have saved the loyal people he had in charge from an orgy of cruelty and licentiousness. Had he stayed his hand

a moment all was lost. Many things were done which we deplore ; which we would not have done ; which he would not have done, or sanctioned, if there were time to balance claims and consider nicely individual rights. But he saved the white population, and put down the insurrection ; and we feel gratitude to him first of all."

Such is, we think, a fair statement of the case relied upon by the more reasonable of the defenders of Mr. Eyre. To this the opposite party answered that in fact the insurrection, supposing it to have been an insurrection, was all over before the floggings, the hangings, and the burnings set in. Not merely were the troops masters of the field, but there was no armed enemy anywhere to be seen in the field or out of it. They contended that men are not warranted in inflicting wholesale and hideous punishments merely in order to strike such terror as may prevent the possibility of any future disturbance. As an illustration of the curious ethical principles which the hour called forth, it may be mentioned that one of the best-instructed and ablest of the London journals distinctly contended that excess of punishment would be fully justified as a means of preventing further outbreaks. "Consider," such was the argument, "what the horrors of a successful outbreak in Jamaica might be, or even of an outbreak successful for a few days ; consider what blood its repression would cost even to the negroes themselves ; and then say whether any one ought to shrink from inflicting a few superfluous floggings and hangings if these would help to strike terror, and make new rebellion impossible ? Even the flogging of women—disagreeable work, no doubt, for English soldiers to have to do—if it struck terror into their husbands and brothers, and thus discouraged rebellion, would it too not be justified ?" One cannot better deal with this argument than by pushing it just a little further. Suppose the burning alive of a few women and children seemed likely to have a deterrent effect on disloyal husbands and fathers generally, would it not be well to light the pile ? What would the torture and death of a score or so of women and children be when compared with the bloodshed which such a timely example might avert ? Yet any sane man would answer that rather



than that he would brave any risk ; and so we get to the end of the argument at once. We have only arrived at an acknowledgment of the fact that the repression of insurrection, like everything on earth, has its restraining moral code, which custom and civilisation, if there were nothing else, must be allowed to establish. The right of Englishmen to rule in Jamaica is a right which has to be exercised with, and not without, regard for human feelings and Christian laws. Not a few persons endeavoured to satisfy their own and the public conscience by praising the virtues of Governor Eyre's career, and casting aspersions on the character of the unfortunate Gordon. Professor Huxley disposed once for all of that sort of argument by the quiet remark that he knew of no law authorising virtuous persons as such to put to death less virtuous persons as such.

The Report of the Commissioners was made in April 1866. It declared in substance that the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to authority, arising partly out of a desire to obtain the land free of rent, and partly out of the want of confidence felt by the labouring class in the tribunals by which most of the disputes affecting their interests were decided ; that the disturbance spread rapidly, and that Mr. Eyre deserved praise for the skill and vigour with which he had stopped it in the beginning ; but that martial law was kept in force too long ; that the punishments inflicted were excessive ; that the punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent ; that the floggings were barbarous, and the burnings wanton and cruel ; that although it was probable that Gordon, by his writings and speeches, had done much to bring about excitement and discontent, and thus rendered insurrection possible, yet there was no sufficient proof of his complicity in the outbreak, or in any organised conspiracy against the Government ; and, indeed, that there was no wide-spread conspiracy of any kind. Of course this finished Mr. Eyre's career as a Colonial Governor. A new Governor, Sir J. P. Grant, was sent out to Jamaica, and a new Constitution was given to the island. The Jamaica Committee, however, did not let the matter drop there. They first called upon the Attorney-General to take proceedings against

Mr. Eyre and some of his subordinates. The Government had, meanwhile, passed into Conservative hands, in consequence of events which have yet to be told; and the Attorney-General declined to prosecute. Probably a Liberal Attorney-General would have done just the same thing. Then the Jamaica Committee decided on prosecuting Mr. Eyre and his subordinates themselves. They took various proceedings, but in every case with the same result. We need not go into the history of these proceedings, and the many controversies, legal and otherwise, which they occasioned. The bills of indictment never got beyond the grand jury stage. The grand jury always threw them out. On one memorable occasion the attempt gave the Lord Chief Justice of England an opportunity of delivering the charge to the grand jury from which we have already cited some passages: a charge entitled to the rank of an historical declaration of the law of England, and the limits of the military power even in cases of insurrection. Mr. Carlyle found great fault with the Chief Justice for having merely laid down the law of England. "Lordship," he wrote, "if you were to speak for six hundred years, instead of six hours, you would only prove the more to us that, unwritten if you will, but real and fundamental, anterior to all written laws and first making written laws possible, there must have been, and is, and will be, coeval with human society from its first beginnings to its ultimate end, an actual martial law of more validity than any other law whatever." The business of the Lord Chief Justice, however, was not to go in philosophical quest of those higher laws of which Mr. Carlyle assumed to be the interpreter. His was the humbler but more practical part to expound the laws of England, and he did his duty.

The prosecutions can hardly be said to have been without use which gave opportunity for this most important exposition from such high authority. But they had no effect as against Mr. Eyre. Even the Chief Justice, who exposed with such just severity the monstrous misuse of power which had been seen in Jamaica, still left it to the grand jury to say whether after all—considering the state

of things that prevailed in the island, the sudden danger, the consternation, and the confusion—the proceedings of the authorities, however mistaken, were not done honestly and faithfully in what was believed to be the proper administration of justice. After many discussions in Parliament, the Government in 1872—once again a Liberal Government—decided on paying Mr. Eyre the expenses to which he had been put in defending himself against the various prosecutions; and the House of Commons, after a long debate, agreed to the vote by a large majority. The Jamaica Committee were denounced by many voices, and in very unmeasured language, for what they had done. Yet no public body ever were urged on to an unpopular course by purer motives than those which influenced Mr. Mill and his associates. They were filled with the same spirit of generous humanity which animated Burke when he pressed the impeachment against Warren Hastings. They were sustained by a desire to secure the rights of British subjects for a despised and maltreated negro population. They were inspired with a longing to cleanse the name of England from the stain of a share in the abominations of that unexampled repression. Yet we do not think on the whole that there was any failure of justice. A career full of bright promise was cut short for Mr. Eyre, and for some of his subordinates as well; and no one accused Mr. Eyre personally of anything worse than a fury of mistaken zeal. The deeds which were done by his authority, or to which, when they were done, he gave his authority's sanction, were branded with such infamy that it is almost impossible such things could ever be done again in England's name. Even those who excused under the circumstances the men by whom the deeds were done, had seldom a word to say in defence of the acts themselves. The cruelties of that saturnalia of vengeance are absolutely without parallel in the history of our times; perhaps the very horror they inspired, the very shame of the few arguments employed to defend them, may make for mercy in the future. The one strong argument for severity on which so many relied when upholding the acts of Mr. Eyre, is curiously confuted by the history of Jamaica itself.

That argument was, that severity of an extraordinary kind was necessary to prevent the repetition of rebellion. Rigour of repression had been tried long enough in Jamaica without producing any such effect. During one hundred and fifty years there had been about thirty insurrections, in some of which the measures of repression employed were sweeping and stern enough to have shaken the nerves of a Couthon and disturbed the conscience of a Claverhouse. The Chief Justice declared that there was not a stone in the island of Jamaica which, if the rains of heaven had not washed off from it the stains of blood, might not have borne terrible witness to the manner in which martial law had been exercised for the suppression of native discontent. The deeds, therefore, that were done under the authority of Mr. Eyre found no plea to excuse them in the history of the past. Such policy had been tried again and again, and had failed. The man who tried it again in 1865 undertook the responsibility of defying the authority of experience, as well as that of constitutional and moral law.

## CHAPTER L

### DRIVEN BACK ACROSS THE RUBICON

THE Queen opened the new Parliament in person. She then performed the ceremony for the first time since the death of the Prince Consort. The speech from the throne contained a paragraph which announced that her Majesty had directed that information should be procured in reference to the right of voting in the election of members of Parliament, and that when the information was complete, "the attention of Parliament will be called to the result thus obtained with a view to such improvements in the laws which regulate the right of voting in the election of members of the House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our free institutions, and conduce to the public welfare." Some announcement on the subject of Reform was expected by every one. Nobody could have had any

doubt that the new Government would at once bring forward some measure to extend the franchise. The only surprise felt was perhaps at the cautious and limited way in which the proposed measure was indicated in the royal speech. Some of the more extreme reformers thought there was something ominous in the way of opening the question. A mere promise to obtain information on the subject of the franchise appeared to be minimising as much as possible the importance of the whole subject. Besides, it was asked, what information is required more than we have already? Is this to be merely an investigation as to the number of persons whom this or that scale of franchise would add to the constituencies? Is the character of the reform to be decided by the mere addition which it would make to the voters' lists rather than by the political principles which an extended franchise represents? Is there to be what Burke calls "a low-minded inquisition into numbers," in order that too many Englishmen should not be allowed the privilege of a vote?

There was something ominous, therefore, in the manner in which the first mention of the new Reform Bill was received as well as in the terms of the announcement. Many circumstances too made the time unpropitious for such an undertaking. The cattle plague had broken out towards the close of the previous year, and had spread with most alarming rapidity. At the end of 1865 it was announced that about 80,000 cattle had been attacked by the disease, of which some 40,000 had died. From 6000 to 8000 animals were dying every week. The Government, the cattle-owners, and the scientific men were much occupied in devising plans for the restriction of the malady. Some keen controversy had arisen over the Government proposals for making good the losses of the cattle-owners whose animals had to be killed in obedience to official orders to prevent the spread of disease. There were already rumours of the approach of that financial distress which was to break out shortly in disastrous commercial panic. Cholera was believed to be travelling ominously westward. There were threatened disturbances in Ireland and alarms about a gigantic Fenian conspiracy. It did not need to

be particularly keen-eyed to foresee that there was likely soon to be a collision of irreconcilable interests on the Continent. There was uneasiness about Jamaica; there was uneasiness about certain English men and women who were detained as prisoners by Theodore, King of Abyssinia. Moreover the Parliament had only just been elected, and a Reform Bill would mean a speedy dissolution, with a renewal of expense and trouble to the members of the House of Commons. Certainly the time did not seem tempting for a sudden revival of the Reform controversy which had been allowed to sleep in a sort of Kyffhäuser cavern during the later years of Lord Palmerston's life.

Many Conservatives did not believe that the studied moderation of the announcement in the Queen's speech could really be taken as evidence of a moderate intention on the part of the Ministry. While Radicals generally insisted that the strength of the old Whig party, "the Dukes," as the phrase went, had been successfully exerted to compel a compromise and keep Mr. Gladstone down, most of the Tories would have it that Mr. Gladstone now had got it all his own way, and that the cautious vagueness of the Queen's speech would only prove to be the prelude to very decisive and alarming changes in the Constitution. Not since the introduction by Lord John Russell of the measure which became law in 1832, had a Reform Bill been expected in England with so much curiosity, with so much alarm, and with so much disposition to a foregone conclusion of disappointment. On March 12 Mr. Gladstone introduced the bill. His speech was eloquent; but the House of Commons was not stirred. It was evident at once that the proposed measure was only a compromise; and a compromise of the most unattractive kind. The substance of the Government scheme may be explained in a single sentence. The bill proposed to reduce the county franchise from fifty pounds to fourteen pounds, and the borough franchise from ten to seven pounds. There was a savings bank franchise, and a lodger franchise, but we need not discuss smaller details and qualifying provisions. The borough franchise of course was the central question in any reform measure; and this was to be

reduced by three pounds. The man who could be enthusiastic over such a reform must have been a person whose enthusiasm was scarcely worth arousing. The peculiarity of the situation was, that without a genuine popular enthusiasm nothing could be done. The House of Commons as a whole did not want reform. For one obvious reason, the House had only just been elected; members had spent money and taken much trouble; and they did not like the idea of having to encounter the risk and expense all over again almost immediately. All the Conservatives were of course openly and consistently opposed to reform; not a few of the professing Liberals secretly detested it. These latter would accept it and try to put on an appearance of welcoming it if popular excitement and the demeanour of the Government showed that they must be for it or against it. Only a small number of men in the House were genuine in their anxiety for immediate change; and of these the majority were too earnest and extreme to care for a reform which only meant a reduction of the borough franchise from ten pounds to seven pounds. It seemed a ridiculous anti-climax, after all the indignant eloquence about "unenfranchised millions," to come down to a scheme for enfranchising a few hundreds here and there. It was hard for ordinary minds to understand that a ten pounds' franchise meant servitude and shame, but a seven pounds' franchise was national liberty and salvation. All this for three pounds was a little too much for plain people to comprehend. The bill was founded on no particular principle; it merely said, "we have at present a certain scale of franchise; let us make it a little lower, and our successors if they feel inclined can keep on lowering it." No well-defined basis was reached; there seemed no reason why, if such a bill had been passed, some politician might not move the session after for a bill to reduce the franchise a pound or two lower. Absolute finality in politics is of course unattainable, but a statesman would do well to see at least that a distinct and secure ledge is reached in his descent. He ought not to be content to slip a little way down to-day, and leave chance to decide whether he may not have to slip a little way further to-morrow.

The announcement made by the Government had only what is called in theatrical circles a *succès d'estime*. Those who believed in the sincerity and high purpose of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and who therefore assumed that if they said this was all they could do there was nothing else to be done—these supported the bill. Mr. Bright supported it; somewhat coldly at first, but afterwards, when warmed by the glow of debate and of opposition, with all his wonted power. It was evident, however, that he was supporting Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone rather than their Reform Bill. Mr. Mill supported the bill, partly no doubt for the same reason, and partly because it had the support of Mr. Bright. But it would have been hard to find any one who said that he really cared much about the measure itself, or that it was the sort of thing he would have proposed if he had his way. There were public meetings got up of course in support of the bill, and the agitation naturally gathered heat as it went on. Mr. Gladstone became for a time a popular agitator on behalf of his measure, and stumped the country during the Easter holidays. It was during this political campaign that he made the famous speech at Liverpool, in which he announced that the Government had passed the Rubicon; had broken the bridge and burned the boats behind them. He truly had done so. His career was to be thenceforward as the path of an arrow in the direction of popular reform; but his Government had to recross the Rubicon; to make use of the broken bridge somehow for the purposes of retreat.

Before the delivery of this celebrated speech, the defects of the bill, and the lack of public interest in it, had produced their natural effect in the House of Commons. The moment it was evident that the public, as a whole, were not enthusiastic about the measure, the House of Commons began to feel that it could do as it pleased in the matter. It may seem rather surprising now that the Conservatives, or at least those of them who had foresight enough to know that some manner of change was inevitable, did not accept this trivial and harmless measure, and so have done with the unwelcome subject



for some time to come. Many of the Conservatives were not only opposed to all reform of the suffrage on principle, but were still under the firm belief that they could stave it off for their time. Others there were who honestly believed that if a change were inevitable it would be better for the good of the country that it should be something in the nature of a permanent settlement, and that there should not be a periodical revival of agitation incessantly perplexing the public mind. Others, too, no doubt, saw even already that there would be partisan chances secured by embarrassing the Government anyhow. Therefore the Conservatives as a man opposed the measure ; but they had allies. Day after day saw new secessions of emboldened Whigs and half-hearted Liberals. The Thanes were flying from the side of the Government. Mr. Gladstone had announced his intention also to bring in a bill dealing with the redistribution of seats ; but he preferred to take this after the Reform Bill. At once he was encountered by an amendment from his own side of the House, and from very powerful representatives of Whig family interest, calling on him to take the redistribution scheme at once ; to alter the rental to a rating franchise ; to do all manner of things calculated to change the nature of the bill, or to interfere with the chances of its being passed into law. The ministerial side of the House was fast becoming demoralised. The Liberal party was breaking up into mutinous camps and unmanageable coteries.

The fate of this unhappy bill is not now a matter of great historical importance. Far more interesting than the process of its defeat is the memory of the eloquence by which it was assailed and defended. One reputation sprang into light with these memorable debates. Mr. Robert Lowe was the hero of the Opposition that fought against the bill. He was the Achilles of the Anti-Reformers. His attacks on the Government had, of course, all the more piquancy that they came from a Liberal, and one who had held office in two Liberal administrations. The Tory benches shouted and screamed with delight, as in speech after speech of admirable freshness and vigour

Mr. Lowe poured his scathing sarcasms in upon the bill and its authors. Even their own leader and champion, Mr. Disraeli, became of comparatively small account with the Tories when they heard Mr. Lowe's invectives against their enemies. Much of Mr. Lowe's success was undoubtedly due to the manner in which he hit the tone and temper of the Conservatives and of the disaffected Whigs. Applause and admiration are contagious in the House of Commons. When a great number of voices join in cheers and in praise, other voices are caught by the attraction, and cheer and praise out of the sheer infection of sympathy. It is needless to say that the applause reacts upon the orator. The more he feels that the House admires him, the more likely he is to make himself worthy of the admiration. The occasion told on Mr. Lowe. His form seemed, metaphorically at least, to grow greater and grander on that scene, as the enthusiasm of his admirers waxed and heated. Certainly he never after that time made any great mark by his speeches, or won back any of the fame as an orator which was his during that short and to him splendid period. But the speeches themselves were masterly as mere literary productions. Not many men could have fewer physical qualifications for success in oratory than Mr. Lowe. He had an awkward and ungainly presence; his gestures were angular and ungraceful; his voice was harsh and rasping; his articulation was so imperfect that he became now and then almost unintelligible; his sight was so short that when he had to read a passage or extract of any kind, he could only puzzle over its contents in a painful and blundering way, even with the paper held up close to his eyes; and his memory was not good enough to allow him to quote anything without the help of documents. How, it may be asked in wonder, was such a speaker as this to contend in eloquence with the torrent-like fluency, the splendid diction, the silver-trumpet voice of Gladstone; or with the thrilling vibrations of Bright's noble eloquence, now penetrating in its pathos, and now irresistible in its humour? Even those who well remember these great debates may ask themselves in unsatisfied wonder the same question now. It is certain that Mr.

Lowe has not the most distant claim to be ranked as an orator with Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright. Yet it is equally certain that he did for that season stand up against each of them, against them both; against, them both at their very best; and that he held his own.

Mr. Disraeli was thrown completely into the shade. Mr. Disraeli was not, it is said, much put out by this. He listened quietly, perhaps even contemptuously, looking upon the whole episode as one destined to pass quickly away. He did not believe that Mr. Lowe was likely to be a peer of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright—or of himself—in debate. “You know I never made much of Mr. Lowe,” he said in conversation with a political opponent some years after, and when Mr. Lowe’s eloquence had already become only a memory. But for the time Mr. Lowe was the master-spirit of the Opposition to the Reform Bill. In sparkling sentences, full of classical allusion and of illustrations drawn from all manner of literatures, he denounced and satirised demagogues, democratic governments, and every influence that tended to bring about any political condition which allowed of an ominous comparison with something in Athenian history. Reduced to their logical and philosophical meaning, Mr. Lowe’s speeches were really nothing but arguments for that immemorial object of desire, the government by the wise and good. They had nothing in particular to do with the small question in domestic legislation, as to whether seven pounds or ten pounds was to be the limit of a borough franchise. They would have been just as effective if used in favour of an existing seven pounds’ qualification, and against a proposed qualification of six pounds fifteen shillings. Seven pounds, it might have been insisted, was just the low-water mark of the wise and good; any lower we shall have the rule of the unwise and the wicked. Nor did Mr. Lowe show how, if the fierce wave of democracy was rising in such terrible might, it could be dammed out by the retention of a ten pounds’ franchise. His alarms and his portents were in amazing contrast to his proposed measures of safety. He hoped to bind Leviathan with packthread. Alaric was at the

gates; Mr. Lowe's last hope was in the power of the Court of Chancery to serve the invader with an injunction. The simple-minded deputies who, during the *coup d'état* in Paris, went forth to meet the soldiers of the usurper with their scarfs of office, in the belief that they could thus restrain them from violation of the constitutional law, were on a philosophical level with Mr. Lowe when he proclaimed to England that her ancient system must fall into cureless ruin and become the shame and scandal of all time, if she abandoned her last rampart, the ten pounds' franchise. But Mr. Lowe was embodying in brilliant sarcasm and vivid paradox the fears, prejudices, and spites, the honest dislikes and solid objections of a large proportion of English society. Trades' unions, strikes, rumours of political disaffection in Ireland, the angry and extravagant words of artisan orators and agitators in London; a steady hatred of all American principles; a certain disappointment that the American Republic had not fulfilled most men's predictions and gone to pieces—these and various other feelings combined to make a great many Englishmen particularly hostile to any proposals for political reform at that moment. Mr. Lowe was not merely the mouthpiece of all these sentiments, but he gave what seemed to be an overwhelming philosophical argument to prove their wisdom and justice. The Conservatives made a hero, and even an idol, of him. Shrewd old members of the party, who ought to have known better, were heard to declare that he was not only the greatest orator, but even the greatest statesman, of the day. In truth, Mr. Lowe was neither orator nor statesman. He had some of the gifts which are needed to make a man an orator, but hardly any of those which constitute a statesman. He was a literary man and a scholar, who had a happy knack of saying bitter things in an epigrammatic way; he really hated the Reform Bill, towards which Mr. Disraeli probably felt no emotion whatever, and he started into prominence as an anti-reformer just at the right moment to suit the Conservatives and embarrass and dismay the Liberal party. He was greatly detested for a time amongst the working

classes, for whose benefit the measure was chiefly introduced. He not only spoke out with cynical frankness his own opinion of the merits and morals of the people "who live in these small houses," but he implied that all the other members of the House held the same opinion, if they would only venture to give it a tongue. He was once or twice mobbed in the streets; he was strongly disliked and dreaded for the hour by the Liberals; he was the most prominent figure on the stage during these weeks of excitement; and no doubt he was perfectly happy.

The debates on the bill brought out some speeches which have not been surpassed in the parliamentary history of our time. Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone were at their very best. Mr. Bright likened the formation of the little band of malcontents to the doings of David in the cave of Adullam when he called about him "every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented," and became a captain over them. The allusion told upon the House with instant effect, for many had suspected and some had said that if Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe had been more carefully conciliated by the Prime Minister at the time of his Government's formation, there might have been no such acrimonious opposition to the bill. The little third party were at once christened the Adullamites, and the name still survives and is likely long to survive its old political history. Mr. Gladstone's speech, with which the great debate on the second reading concluded, was aflame with impassioned eloquence. One passage, in which he met the superfluous accusation, that he had come over a stranger to the Liberal camp, was filled with a certain pathetic dignity. The closing words of the speech, in which he prophesied a speedy success to the principles then on the verge of defeat, brought the debate fittingly up to its highest point of interest and excitement. "You cannot," he said in his closing words, "fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move on in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great

social forces are against you ; they are marshalled on our side, and the banner which we now carry, though perhaps at this moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet soon again will float in the eye of heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms perhaps not to an easy but to a certain and a not distant victory."

This speech was concluded on the morning of April 28. The debate which it brought to a close had been carried on for eight nights. The House of Commons was wrought up to a pitch of the most intense excitement when the division came to be taken. The closing passages of Mr. Gladstone's speech had shown clearly enough that he did not expect much of a triumph for the Government. The House was crowded to excess. The numbers voting were large beyond almost any previous instance. There were for the second reading of the bill 318: there were against it 313. The second reading was carried by a majority of only five. The wild cheers of the Conservatives and the Adullamites showed on which "sword sat laurel victory." Every one knew then that the bill was doomed. It only remained for those who opposed it to put a few amendments on the paper as a prelude to the bill's going into committee, and the Opposition must succeed. The question now was not whether the measure would be a failure, but only when the failure would have to be confessed.

The time for the confession soon came. The opponents of the reform scheme kept pouring in amendments on the motion to go into committee. These came chiefly from the ministerial side of the House. As in 1860, so now in 1866, the Conservative leader of the House of Commons had the satisfaction of seeing his work done for him very effectively by those who were in general his political opponents. He was not compelled to run the risk or incur the responsibility of pledging himself or his party against all reform in order to get rid of this particular scheme. All that he wanted was being done for him by men who had virtually pledged themselves over and over again in favour of reform. The bill at last got into committee ; and here the strife was renewed. Lord Stanley moved an amend-

ment to postpone the clauses relating to the county franchise until the redistribution of seats should first have been dealt with. This amendment was rejected, but not by a great majority. Mr. Ward Hunt moved that the franchise in counties be fourteen pounds rateable value, instead of gross estimated rental. This too was defeated. Lord Dunkellin, usually a supporter of the Government, moved that the seven pounds franchise in boroughs be on a rating instead of a rental qualification. The effect of this would be to make the franchise a little higher than the Government proposed to fix it. Houses are generally rated at a value somewhat below the amount of the rent paid on them, and therefore a rating franchise of seven pounds would probably in most places be about equivalent to a rental franchise of eight pounds. Therefore the opponents of reform would have interposed another barrier of twenty shillings in certain cases between England and the flood of democracy. Prudent and law-abiding men might accept with safety a franchise of eight pounds, or even say seven pounds ten shillings, in boroughs; but a franchise of seven pounds would mean the Red Republic, mob-rule, the invasion of democracy, the shameful victory, and all the other terrible things which Mr. Lowe had been foreshadowing in his prophetic fury. Lord Dunkellin carried his amendment; 315 voted for it; only 304 against. The announcement of the numbers was received with tumultuous demonstrations of joy. The Adullamites had saved the State. Lord Russell's last reform scheme was a failure; and the Liberal Ministry had come to an end.

Lord Russell and his colleagues tendered their resignation to the Queen, and, after a little delay and some discussion, the resignation was accepted. It would hardly have been possible for Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone to do otherwise. Their Reform Bill was the one distinctive measure of the session. It was the measure which especially divided their policy from that of Lord Palmerston's closing years. To abandon it would be to abandon their chief reason for being in office at all. They could not carry it. They had got as far in the session as the last few days of June, and everything was against them. The commercial

panic had intervened. The suspension of the great firm of Overend and Gurney had brought failure after failure with it. The famous "Black Friday," Friday, May 11, had made its most disastrous mark in the history of the City of London. The Bank Charter had to be suspended. The cattle plague, although checked by the stringent measures of the Government, was still raging, and the landlords and cattle-owners were still in a state of excitement and alarm, and had long been clamouring over the insufficiency of the compensation which other classes condemned as unreasonable alike in principle and in proportion. The day before the success of Lord Dunkellin's motion, the Emperor of Austria had issued a manifesto explaining the course of events which compelled him to draw the sword against Prussia. A day or two after, Italy entered into the quarrel by declaring war against Austria. The time seemed hopeless for pressing a small Reform Bill on in the face of an unwilling Parliament, and for throwing the country into the turmoil and expense of another general election. Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone accepted the situation, and resigned office.

The one mistake they had made was to bring in a Reform Bill of so insignificant and almost unmeaning a character. It is more than probable that the difficulties Lord Russell had with the Whig section of his Cabinet compelled him to compromise to a degree which his own inclinations and his own principles would not have approved, and to which Mr. Gladstone could only yield a reluctant assent. But if this be the explanation of what happened, it would have been better to put off the measure for a session or two, and allow public opinion out of doors to express itself so clearly as to convince the Whigs that the people in general were really in earnest about reform. No Reform Bill can be carried unless it is sustained by such an amount of enthusiasm among its supporters in and out of Parliament as to convince the timid, the selfish, and the doubting that the measure must be passed. In the nature of things the men actually in Parliament cannot be expected to enter with any great spontaneous enthusiasm into a project for sending them back to their constituencies to run the risk



and bear the cost of a new election by untried voters. It will, therefore, always be easy for the men in possession to persuade their consciences that the public good is opposed to any change, if no strong demand be made for the particular change in question. Now the compromise which Lord Russell's Government offered in the shape of a Reform Bill was not calculated to stir up the enthusiasm of any one. The ardour with which in the end it came to be advocated was merely the heat which in men's natures is always generated by a growing controversy and by fierce opposition. The strongest and most effective attack made by the Opposition, that led by Mr. Lowe, was not directed against that particular measure so much as against all measures of reform; against the fundamental principle of a popular suffrage, and indeed of a representative assembly. As soon as the doubtful men in the House discovered that there was no genuine enthusiasm existing on behalf of the bill, its fate became certain. When the more extreme Reformers came to think over the condition of things, and when their spirits were set free from the passion of recent controversy, very few of them could have felt any great regret for the defeat of the bill. Those who understood the real feelings of the yet unenfranchised part of the population, knew well that some Administration would have to introduce a strong measure of reform before long. They were content to wait. The interval of delay proved shorter than they could well have expected.

The defeat of the bill and the resignation of the Ministry brought the political career of Lord Russell to a close. He took advantage of the occasion soon after to make a sort of formal announcement that he handed over the task of leading the Liberal party to Mr. Gladstone. He appeared indeed in public life on several occasions after his resignation of office. He took part sometimes in the debates of the House of Lords; he even once or twice introduced measures there, and endeavoured to get them passed. During the long controversies on the Washington Treaty and the claims of the United States, he took a somewhat prominent part in the discussions of the Peers, and was always listened to with attention and respect. About a

year after the fall of his Administration he was one of the company at a breakfast given to Mr. Garrison, the American Anti-Slavery leader, in St. James's Hall, and he won much applause there by the frankness and good spirit of his tribute to the memory of President Lincoln, and by his manly acknowledgment of more than one mistake in his former judgments of Lincoln's policy and character. Lord Russell spoke on this occasion with a vigour quite equal to that which he might have displayed some twenty years before; and indeed many of those present felt surprised at his resolve to abandon active public life while he still seemed so well capable of bearing a part in it. Lord Russell's career, however, was practically at an end. It had been a long and an interesting career. It was begun amid splendid chances. Lord John Russell was born in the very purple of politics; he was cradled and nursed among statesmen and orators; the fervid breath of young liberty fanned his boyhood; his tutors, friends, companions, were the master-spirits who rule the fortunes of nations; he had the ministerial benches for a training ground, and had a seat in the Administration at his disposal when another young man might have been glad of a seat in an opera box. He must have been brought into more or less intimate association with all the men and women worth knowing in Europe since the early part of the century. He was a pupil of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh, and he sat as a youth at the feet of Fox. He had accompanied Wellington in some of his Peninsular campaigns; he measured swords with Canning and Peel successfully through years of parliamentary warfare. He knew Metternich and Talleyrand. He had met the widow of Charles Stuart, the young Chevalier, in Florence; and had conversed with Napoleon in Elba. He knew Cavour and Bismarck. He was now an ally of Daniel O'Connell, and now of Cobden and Bright. He was the close friend of Thomas Moore; he knew Byron, and was one of the few allowed to read the personal memoirs, which were unfortunately destroyed by Byron's friends. Lord John Russell had tastes for literature, for art, for philosophy, for history, for politics, and his æstheticism had the advantage that it made him seek the

society and appreciate the worth of men of genius and letters. Thus he never remained a mere politician like Pitt or Palmerston. His public career suggests almost as strange a series of contradictions, or paradoxes, as Macaulay finds in that of Pitt. He who began with a reputation for a heat of temperament worthy of Achilles was for more than half his career regarded as a frigid and bloodless politician. In Ireland he was long known rather as the author of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill than as the early friend of Catholic Emancipation ; in England as the parent of petty and abortive Reform Bills, rather than as the promoter of one great Reform Bill. Abroad and at home he came to be thought of as the Minister who disappointed Denmark and abandoned Poland, rather than as the earnest friend and faithful champion of oppressed nationalities. No statesman could be a more sincere and thorough opponent of slavery in all its forms and works ; and yet in the mind of the American people, Lord Russell's name was for a long time associated with the idea of a scarcely-concealed support of the slave-holders' rebellion. Much of this curious contrast, this seeming inconsistency, is due to the fact that for the greater part of his public life Lord Russell's career was a mere course of see-saw between office and opposition. The sort of superstition that long prevailed in our political affairs limited the higher offices of statesmanship to two or three conventionally acceptable men on either side. If not Sir Robert Peel then it must be Lord John Russell ; if it was not Lord Derby it must be Lord Palmerston. Therefore if the business of government was to go on at all, a statesman must take office now and then with men whom he could not mould wholly to his purpose, and must act in seeming sympathy with principles and measures which he would himself have little cared to originate. Lord Palmerston complained humorously in one of his later letters, that a Prime Minister could no longer have it all his own way in his Cabinet. Men were coming up who had wills and consciences, ideas and abilities of their own, and who would not consent to be the mere clerks of the Prime Minister. Great popular parties too, he might have added, were growing up in the country with powerful leaders,

men whose opinion must be taken into account on every subject even though they never were to be in office. It is easy enough to understand how under such conditions the minister who had seemed a daring Reformer to one generation might seem but a chilly compromiser to another. It is easy to understand how the career, which at its opening was illumined by the splendid victory of the Reform Bill of 1832, should have been clouded at its close by the rather ignominious failure of the Reform Bill of 1866. The personal life of Lord Russell was consistent all through. He began as a Reformer; he ended as a Reformer. If the "might-have-beens" were not always a vanity, it would be reasonable as well as natural to regret that it was not given to Lord Russell to complete the work of 1832 by a genuine and successful measure of Reform in 1866.

## CHAPTER LI.

### THE REFORM AGITATION

THE Reform banner then had "drooped over the sinking heads" of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and the Liberal Administration was at an end. The Queen, of course, sent for Lord Derby. There was no one else to send for. Somebody must carry on the Queen's government; and therefore Lord Derby had no alternative but to set to work and try to form an Administration. He did not appear to have done so with much good-will. He had no personal desire to enter office once again; he had no inclination for official responsibilities. He was not very fond of work, even when younger and stronger, and the habitual indolence of his character had naturally grown with years, and just now with infirmities. There was, therefore, something of a genuine patriotic self-sacrifice in the consent which he gave to relieve the Sovereign and the country from difficulties by accepting at such a time the office of Prime Minister, and undertaking to form a Government. It was generally understood, however, that

he would only consent to be the Prime Minister of an interval, and that whenever with convenience to the interests of the State some other hand could be entrusted with power, he would expect to be released from the trouble of official life. The prospect for a Conservative Ministry was not inviting. Despite the manner in which Lord Russell's Reform Bill had been hustled out of existence, no sagacious Tory seriously believed that the new Government could do as Lord Palmerston had done; that is, could treat the whole Reform question as if it were shelved by the recent action of the House of Commons, and take no further trouble about it. Lord Derby, too, when he came to form a Government, found himself met by one unexpected difficulty. He had hoped to be able to weld together a sort of coalition Ministry, which should to a certain extent represent both sides of the House. It seemed to him only reasonable to assume that the men who had co-operated with the Conservatives so earnestly in resisting the Reform measures of the late Government would consent to co-operate with the Conservative Ministry which their action had forced into existence. Accordingly, he at once invited the leading members of the Adullamite party to accept places in his Administration. He was met by disappointment. The Adullamite chiefs agreed to decline all such co-operation. A leading article appeared one morning in a journal which was understood to have Mr. Lowe for one of its contributors, announcing in a solemn sentence made more solemn by being printed in capital letters, that those who had thrown out the Liberal Ministry on principle were bound to prove that they had not been animated by any ambition or self-seeking of their own. Indeed, the voice of public opinion freely acquitted some of them of any such desire from the beginning. Mr. Lowe, for example, was always thought to be somewhat uncertain and crotchety in his views. There were not wanting persons who said that he had no set and serious political opinions at all; that he was more easily charmed by antithesis than by principle; and that he would have been at any time ready to sacrifice his party to his paradox. But no one doubted his personal

sincerity; and no one was surprised that he should have declined to accept any advantage from the reaction of which he had been the guiding spirit. About the rest of the Adullamites, truth to say, very few persons thought at all. No one doubted their sincerity, for indeed no one asked himself any question on the subject. Some of them were men of great territorial influence; some were men of long standing in Parliament. But they were absolutely unnoticed now that the crisis was over. The reaction was ascribed to one man alone. There was some curiosity felt as to the course that one man would pursue; but when it was known that Mr. Lowe would not take office under Lord Derby, nobody cared what became of the other denizens of the Cave. They might take office or let it alone; the public at large were absolutely indifferent on the subject.

The session had advanced far towards its usual time of closing, when Lord Derby completed the arrangements for his Administration. Mr. Disraeli, of course, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Lord Stanley was Foreign Secretary. Lord Cranborne, formerly Lord Robert Cecil, was entrusted with the care of India; Lord Carnarvon undertook the Colonies; General Peel became War Minister; Sir Stafford Northcote was President of the Board of Trade; and Mr. Walpole took on himself the management of the Home Office, little knowing what a troublous business he had brought upon his shoulders. Sir John Pakington boldly assumed the control of the Admiralty, an appropriation of office to which only the epigram of a Beaumarchais could supply adequate illustration. On July 9 Lord Derby was able to announce to the Peers that he had put together his house of cards.

The new Ministry had hardly taken their places when a perfect storm of agitation broke out all over the country. The Conservatives and the Adullamites had both asserted that the working people in general were indifferent about the franchise; and a number of organisations now sprang into existence, having for their object to prove to the world that no such apathy prevailed. Reform Leagues

and Reform Unions started up as if out of the ground. Public meetings of vast dimensions began to be held day after day for the purpose of testifying to the strength of the desire for Reform. The most noteworthy of these was the famous Hyde Park meeting. The Reformers of the metropolis determined to hold a monster meeting in the Park. The authorities took the very unwise course of determining to prohibit it, and a proclamation or official notice was issued to that effect. The Reformers were acting under the advice of Mr. Edmond Beales, president of the Reform League, a barrister of some standing, and a man of character and considerable ability. Mr. Beales was of opinion that the authorities had no legal power to prevent the meeting; and it need hardly be said that a Commissioner of Police, or even a Home Secretary, is not qualified to make anything legal or illegal by simply proclaiming it so. The London Reformers, therefore, determined to try their right with the authorities. On July 23, a number of processions, marching with bands and banners, set out from different parts of London and made for Hyde Park. The authorities had posted notices announcing that the gates of the Park would be closed at five o'clock that evening. When the first of the processions arrived at the Park the gates were closed, and a line of policemen was drawn outside. The president of the Reform League, Mr. Beales, and some other prominent Reformers, came up in a carriage, alighted, and endeavoured to enter the Park. They were refused admittance. They asked for the authority by which they were refused; and they were told it was the authority of the Commissioner of Police. They then quietly re-entered the carriage. It was their intention first to assert their right, and then, being refused, to try it in the regular and legal way. It was no part of their intention to make any disturbance. They seem to have taken every step which they thought necessary to guard against any breach of the peace. It was clearly their interest, as it was no doubt their desire, to have the law on their side. They went to Trafalgar Square, followed by a large crowd, and there a meeting was extemporised, at which resolutions

were passed demanding the extension of the suffrage, and thanking Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and other men who had striven to obtain it. The speaking was short; it was not physically possible to speak with any effect to so large an assemblage. Then that part of the demonstration came quietly to an end.

Meanwhile, however, a different scene had been going on at Hyde Park. A large and motley crowd had hung about the gates and railings. The crowd was composed partly of genuine Reformers, partly of mere sight-seers and curiosity-mongers, partly of mischievous boys, and to no inconsiderable extent of ordinary London roughs. Not a few of all sections, perhaps, were a little disappointed that things had gone so quietly off. Many of the younger lookers-on felt aggrieved exactly as the boys did, in the "Bride of Lammermoor," when they found that the supposed fire was not to end in any explosion after all, and that the castle had "gane out like an auld wife's spunk." The mere mass of people pressed and pressing round the railings would almost in any case have somewhat seriously threatened their security and tried their strength. Emerson has said that every revolution, however great, is first of all a thought in the mind of a single man. One disappointed Reformer lingering in Park Lane, with his breast against the rails, as the poetic heroine had hers, metaphorically, against the thorn, became impressed with the idea that the barrier was somewhat frail and shaky. How would it be, he vaguely thought for a moment, if he were to give an impulse and drive the railing in? What, he wondered to himself, would come of that? The temptation was great. He shook the rails; the rails began to give way. Not that alone, but the sudden movement was felt along the line, and into a hundred minds came at once the great revolutionary idea which an instant before had been a thought in the mind of one hitherto unimportant man. A simultaneous impulsive rush, and some yards of railing were down, and men in scores were tumbling, and floundering, and rushing over them. The example was followed along Park Lane, and in a moment half a mile of iron railing was lying on the grass, and a



tumultuous and delighted mob were swarming over the Park. The news ran wildly through the town. Some thought it a revolt; others were of opinion that it was a revolution. The first day of liberty was proclaimed here—the breaking loose of anarchy was shrieked at there. The mob capered and jumped over the sward for half the night through. Flower-beds and shrubs suffered a good deal, not so much from wanton destruction as from the pure boisterousness which came of an unexpected opportunity for horse-play. There were a good many little encounters with the police; stones were thrown on the one side and truncheons used on the other pretty freely; a detachment of foot guards was kept near the spot in readiness, but their services were not required. Indeed, the mob good-humouredly cheered the soldiers whenever they caught sight of them. A few heads were broken on both sides, and a few prisoners were made by the police; but there was no revolution, no revolt, no serious riot even, and no intention in the mind of any responsible person that there should be a riot. Mr. Disraeli that night declared in the House of Commons—half probably in jest, half certainly in earnest—that he was not quite sure whether he had still a house to go to. He found his house yet standing, and firmly roofed, when he returned home that night. London slept feverishly, and awoke next day to find things going on very much as before. Crowds hastened, half in amusement, half in fear, to look upon the scene of the previous evening's turmoil. There were the railings down sure enough; and in the Park was still a large idle crowd, partly of harmless sight-seers, partly of roughs, with a considerable body of police keeping order. But there was no popular rising; and London began once more to eat its meals in peace. The sudden tumult was harmlessly over, and the one personage whose impulse first shook the railings of the Park may even now console himself in his obscurity by the thought that his push carried Reform.

Nothing can well be more certain than the fact that the Hyde Park riot, as it was called, convinced her Majesty's Ministers of the necessity of an immediate adoption of the reform principle. The Government took

the Hyde Park riot with portentous gravity. Mr. Beales and some of his colleagues waited upon the Home Secretary next day, for the purpose of advising him to withdraw the military and police from the Park, and leave it in the custody of the Reformers. Mr. Beales gravely lectured the Government for what they had done, and declared, as was undoubtedly the fact, that the foolish conduct of the Administration had been the original cause of all the disturbance. The Home Secretary, Mr. Walpole, a gentle and kindly man, had lost his head in the excitement of the hour. He mentally saw himself charged with the responsibility of civil strife and bloodshed. He was melted out of all self-command by the kindly bearing of Mr. Beales and the Reformers, and when they assured him that they were only anxious to help him to keep order, he fairly broke down and wept. He expressed himself with meek gratitude for their promised co-operation, and agreed to almost anything they could suggest. It was understood that the right of meeting in Hyde Park was left to be tested in some more satisfactory way at a future day, and the leaders of the Reform League took their departure undoubted masters of the situation.

All through the autumn and winter meetings were held in the great towns and cities to promote the cause of reform. They were for the most part mere demonstrations of numbers; and every one of any sagacity knew perfectly well that it was by display of numbers the greatest effect would be produced upon the Ministry. Therefore the meetings were usually preceded by processions, and the attention of the public was turned far more to the processions than to the meetings. Hardly any one took the trouble to discuss what was said at the meetings; but a constant public controversy was going on about the numerical strength of the processions. A hundred witnesses on both sides of the dispute rushed to the newspapers to bear testimony to the length of time which a particular procession had occupied in passing a given point. Rival calculations were elaborately made to get at the number of persons marching which such a length of time implied. The most extraordinary differences of calculations were

exhibited. It was a remarkable fact that the opponents of reform saw invariably a much smaller gathering than its supporters beheld. The calculations of the one set of observers brought out only hundreds, where those of the other resulted in thousands. A procession which one critic proved by the most elaborate and careful statistics to have contained a quarter of a million of men, a rival calculator was prepared to show could not by any possibility have contained more than ten or twelve thousand. Cooler observers than the professed partisans of one side or the other, thought that the most significant feature of these demonstrations was the part taken by the organised trades associations of working men. Some of the processions were made up exclusively of the members of these organised Trades Unions. They acted in strict deference to the resolutions and the discipline of their associations. They were great in numbers, and most imposing in their silent united strength. They had grown into all that discipline and that power unpatronised by any manner of authority; unrecognised by the law, unless indeed where the law occasionally went out of its way to try to prevent or to thwart the aims of their organisation. They had now grown to such strength that law and authority must see to make terms with them. The most extravagant rumours as to their secret doings and purposes alarmed the timid; and there can be no doubt that if a popular or social revolution were needed or were impending, the action taken by the working men's associations would have been of incalculable moment to the cause it espoused. As rank after rank of these men marched in quiet confidence through the principal streets of London, the thought must have occurred to many minds that here was an entirely new element in the calculations alike of statesmen and of demagogues, well capable of being made a new source of strength to a State under honest leadership and any really sound system of legislation, but qualified also to become a source of serious public danger, if misled by the demagogue or unfairly dealt with by the reactionary legislator. Some of these associations had supported great industrial strikes in which the judgment and the sympathies

of all the classes that usually lead were against them. The capitalist and all who share his immediate interests; the employers, the rich of every kind, the aristocratic, the self-appointed public instructors had all been against them; and they had nevertheless gone deliberately and stubbornly their own way. Sometimes they, or the cause they represented, had prevailed; often they and it had been defeated; but they had never acknowledged a defeat in principle, and they had kept on their own course undismayed, and, as many would have put it, unconvinced and unreconciled. At this very time some of the doings of Trades Unions, or of those who took on themselves to represent the purposes of such organisations, were creating dismay in many parts of England, and were a subject of excited discussion everywhere over the country. It could not but be a matter of the gravest moment when the "organisation of labour," as it would once have been grandiloquently called, thus turned out of its own direct path and identified itself, its cause, its resources, and its discipline with any great political movement.

Thus in England, the year passed away. Men were organising reform demonstrations on the one side and showing the futility of them on the other. The calculations as to the length of processions and the time occupied in passing particular street corners or lamp-posts went on unceasingly. Stout Tories vowed that the Government never would yield to popular clamour. Not a few timid Reformers hoped in their secret hearts that Lord Derby would really stand fast. Many Liberals who could admit of no hope from the Tories, were already prepared with the conviction that the Government would risk all on the resolution to deny extended suffrage to the working classes. Not a few on both sides had a strong impression that Mr. Disraeli would do something to keep his friends in power, although they did not perhaps quite suspect that he was already engaged in the work of educating his party.

While England was thus occupied, stirring events were taking place elsewhere. In the interval between the resignation of Lord Russell and the completion of Lord

Derby's Ministry, the battle of Sadowa had been fought. The leadership of Germany had been decisively won by Prussia. The "humiliation of Olmutz" had been avenged. Venetia had been added to Italy, Austria had been excluded from any share in German affairs, and Prussia and France had been placed in that position which M. Prevost-Paradol likened to that of two express trains starting along the same line from opposite directions. The complete overthrow of Austria came with the shock of a bewildering surprise upon the great mass of the English public. Faith in the military strength of Austria had survived even the evidence of Solferino. English public instructors were for the most part as completely agreed about the utter incapacity of the Prussians for the business of war as if nobody had ever heard of Frederick the Great. Not many days before Sadowa, a leading London newspaper had a description, half pitiful, half contemptuous, of the unfortunate shopboys and young mechanics of whom the Prussian army was understood to be composed, being hurried and driven along to the front to make food for powder for the well-trained legions of Austria under the command of the irresistible Benedek.

Just before the adjournment of Parliament for the recess, a great work of peace was accomplished; perhaps the only work of peace then possible which could be mentioned after the warlike business of Sadowa without producing the effect of an anti-climax. This was the completion of the Atlantic cable. On the evening of July 27, 1866, the cable was laid between Europe and America. Next day Lord Stanley, as Foreign Minister, was informed that perfect communication existed between England and the United States by means of the thread of wire that lay beneath the Atlantic. Words of friendly congratulation and greeting were interchanged between the Queen and the President of the United States. Ten years all but a month or two had gone by since Mr. Cyrus W. Field, the American promoter of the Atlantic telegraph project, had first tried to inspire cool and calculating men in London, Liverpool, and Manchester with some faith in his project. He was not a scientific man; he was not

the inventor of the principle of inter-oceanic telegraphy; he was not even the first man to propose that a company should be formed for the purpose of laying a cable beneath the Atlantic. So long before as 1845 an attempt had been made by the Messrs. Brett to induce the English Government to assist them in a scheme for laying an electric wire to connect Europe with America. A plan for the purpose was actually registered; but the Government took no interest in the project, probably regarding it as on a par with the frequent applications which are made for the countenance and help of the Treasury in the promotion of flying machines and of projectiles to destroy an enemy's fleet at a thousand miles' distance. But the achievement of the Atlantic cable was none the less as distinctly the work of Mr. Cyrus Field as the discovery of America was that of Columbus. It was not he who first thought of doing the thing; but it was he who first made up his mind that it could be done, and showed the world how to do it, and did it in the end. The history of human invention has not a more inspiring example of patience living down discouragement, and perseverance triumphing over defeat. The first attempt to lay the cable was made in 1857; but the vessels engaged in the expedition had only got about three hundred miles from the west coast of Ireland when the cable broke, and the effort had to be given up for that year. Next year the enterprise was renewed upon a different principle. Two ships of war, the *Agamemnon*, English, and the *Niagara*, American, sailed out together for the Mid-Atlantic where they were to part company, having previously joined their cables, and were each to make for her own shore, each laying the line of wire as she went. Stormy weather arose suddenly and prevented the vessels from doing anything. The cable was broken several times in the effort to lay it, and at last the expedition returned. Another effort, however, was made that summer. The cable was actually laid. It did for a few days unite Europe and America. Messages of congratulation passed along between the Queen and the President of the United States. The Queen congratulated the President upon

"the successful completion of the great international work," and was convinced that "the President will unite with her in fervently hoping that the electric cable which now connects Great Britain with the United States will prove an additional link between the nations whose friendship is founded in their common interest and reciprocal esteem." The rejoicings in America were exuberant. Suddenly, however, the signals became faint; the messages grew inarticulate, and before long the power of communication ceased altogether. The cable became a mere cable again; the wire that spoke with such a miraculous eloquence had become silent. The construction of the cable had proved to be defective, and a new principle had to be devised by science. Yet something definite had been accomplished. It had been shown that a cable could be stretched and maintained under the ocean more than two miles deep and two thousand miles across. Another attempt was made in 1865, but it proved again a failure, and the shivered cable had to be left for the time in the bed of the Atlantic. At last, in 1866, the feat was accomplished, and the Atlantic telegraph was added to the realities of life. It has now become a distinct part of our civilised system. We have ceased to wonder at it. We accept it and its consequent facts with as much composure as we take the existence of the inland telegraph or the penny post. It seems hard now to understand how people got on when it took a fortnight to receive news from the United States. Since the success of the Atlantic cable many telegraphic wires have been laid in the beds of oceans. All England chafed as at an insufferable piece of negligence on the part of somebody the other day, when it was found in a moment of national emergency that there was a lack of direct telegraphic communication between this country and the Cape of Good Hope, and that we could not ask a question of South Africa and have an answer within a few minutes. Perhaps it may encourage future projectors and inventors to know, that in the case of the Atlantic cable, as in that of the Suez Canal, some of the highest scientific authority was given to proclaim the

actual hopelessness, the wild impracticability, the sheer physical impossibility of such an enterprise having any success. "Before the ships left this country with the cable," wrote Robert Stephenson in 1857, "I very publicly predicted as soon as they got into deep water a signal failure. It was in fact inevitable." Nine years after, the inevitable had been avoided; the failure turned to success

## CHAPTER LII

### THE LEAP IN THE DARK

THE autumn and winter of agitation passed away, and the time was at hand when the new Ministry must meet a new session of Parliament. The country looked with keen interest, and also with a certain amused curiosity, to see what the Government would do with Reform in the session of 1867. When Lord Derby took office he had not in any way committed himself and his colleagues against a Reform Bill. On the contrary, he had announced that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see a very considerable proportion of the now excluded class admitted to the franchise; but he had qualified this announcement by the expression of a doubt whether any measure of Reform on which the two great political parties could agree would be likely to satisfy the extreme Reformers, or to put a stop to agitation. More than once Lord Derby had intimated plainly enough that he was willing to make one other effort at a settlement of the question, but if that effort should not succeed he would have nothing more to do with the matter. He was well known to have taken office reluctantly, and he gave it to be clearly understood that he did not by any means propose to devote the remainder of his life to the business of rolling Reform Bills a little way up the parliamentary hill merely in order to see them rolled down again. Most persons assumed, however, that Mr. Disraeli would look at the whole question from a



different point of view; that he had personal and natural ambition still to gratify; and that he was not likely to allow the position of his party to be greatly damaged by any lack of flexibility on his part. The Conservatives were in office, but only in office; they were not in power. The defection among the Liberals, and not their own strength or success, had set the Tories on the ministerial benches. They could not possibly keep their places there without at least trying to amuse the country on the subject of Reform. The great majority of Liberals felt sure that some effort would be made by the Government to carry a bill, but their general impression was that it would be a measure cleverly put together with the hope of inducing the country to accept shadow for substance; and that nothing would come of it except an interval during which the demand of the unenfranchised classes would become more and more earnest and impassioned. It had not entered into the mind of any one to conceive that Lord Derby's Government were likely to entertain the country by the odd succession of surprises which diversified the session, and to assist at the gradual formation, by contribution from all sides, sets, and individuals, of a Reform measure far more broadly liberal and democratic than anything which Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone would have ventured or cared to introduce.

Parliament opened on February 5. The Speech from the Throne alluded, as every one had expected that it would, to the subject of Reform. "Your attention," so ran the words of the speech, "will again be called to the state of the representation of the people in Parliament;" and then the hope was expressed that "Your deliberations, conducted in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance, may lead to the adoption of measures which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, shall freely extend the elective franchise." The hand of Mr. Disraeli, people said, was to be seen clearly enough in these vague and ambiguous phrases. How, it was asked, can the franchise be freely extended, in the Reformer's sense, without disturbing the balance of political power unduly, in Mr. Disraeli's sense? Again and again, in session after

session, he had been heard arguing that a great enlargement of the suffrage to the working classes must disturb the balance of political power; that it would in itself be a disturbance of the balance of political power; that it would give an immense preponderance to a class "homogeneous"—such was Mr. Disraeli's own favourite word—in their interests and fashions. How then could he now offer to introduce any such change? And what other change did any one want? What other change would satisfy anybody who wanted a change at all? More and more the conviction spread that Mr. Disraeli would only try to palm off some worthless measure on the House of Commons, and, by the help of the insincere Reformers and the Adulamites, endeavour to induce the majority to accept it. People had little idea, however, of the flexibility the Government were soon to display. The history of Parliament in our modern days, or indeed in any days that we know much of, has nothing like the proceedings of that extraordinary session.

On February 11 Mr. Disraeli announced that the Government had made up their minds to proceed "by way of resolution." The great difficulty, he explained, in the way of passing a Reform Bill was that the two great political parties could not be got to agree beforehand on any principles by which to construct a measure. "Let us then, before we go to work at the construction of a Reform Bill this time, agree among ourselves as to what sort of measure we want. The rest will be easy." He, therefore, announced his intention to put into the parliamentary caldron a handful of resolutions, out of which, when they had been allowed to simmer, would miraculously arise the majestic shape of a good Reform Bill made perfect. Mr. Disraeli relied greatly on the example afforded by the construction of the new system of government for India as an encouragement to the course he now recommended. We have seen that after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny there was much difficulty felt about the creation of a new scheme for the government of India. The House of Commons then agreed to proceed carefully by way of resolution in the first instance, and thus got the principles on which they

proposed to govern India completely settled before they set about embodying them in practical legislation. Only the curious ingenuity of Mr. Disraeli's mind could have discovered any resemblance between the two cases. When Parliament had to take on itself the government of India, the first difficulty was to settle the principles on which India could best be governed. It was not a question of party; one party was as much in a difficulty as another; neither was pledged to any particular course. It was a time for consultation, for the hearing of all opinions, for the consideration and comparison of all testimonies and suggestions. It was, in short, a time of novelty and of uncertainty, when the only reasonable course was for the two great parties to take informal counsel before either committed itself to any defined scheme or even principle of action. What resemblance did such a condition of things bear to that in which Parliament found itself now that it had to consider the subject of an extended franchise? The difficulty arose not from a lack of knowledge, but from the existence of different opinions and different principles. All that could be got at in the way of information had been times out of mind showered out over the whole subject of Reform. It had been discussed down to the very dregs in Parliament after Parliament. Neither of the two great political parties wanted more information of any kind, but both having long been in possession of all the information accessible to the quest of man, they were unable to agree as to the course which ought to be taken, and differed absolutely in their political principles. One party was pledged by its traditions and its supposed interests to oppose a popular suffrage; the other was pledged in exactly the same way to support it. What possible chance was there of a common ground being found by the discussion of a series of resolutions? If either party was willing to compromise, it had only to say so; two sentences would sufficiently explain what the compromise was to be. Each saw as distinctly as the other what it wanted to have; if either was willing to renounce any part of its supposed claim, it would be enough to say so. A suitor asks for a girl in marriage;

her father refuses to consent. Would the two be brought any nearer to an agreement if they were to hold a solemn conference, and draw up a series of resolutions setting forth what in the opinion of each were the true conditions of a happy union? Just as well might Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Bright have set about drawing up a series of resolutions to embody what each thought of the conditions of a Reform Bill.

The resolutions which Mr. Disraeli proposed to submit to the House were for the most part sufficiently absurd. Some of them were platitudes which it could not be worth any one's while to take the trouble of affirming by formal resolution. What advantage could there be in declaring by resolution that "it is contrary to the Constitution of this realm to give to any one class or interest a predominating power over the rest of the community"? Who ever said, or was likely to say, that to give one class a preponderating power over the rest of the community was in accordance with the principles of the Constitution? Even if Jack Cade were prepared to demand such a power for his own class, he would not take the trouble of trying to convince people that it could be done in conformity with the existing principles of the Constitution. To what purpose was the House of Commons invited to declare that in any redistribution of seats the main consideration should be "the expediency of supplying representation to places not at present represented, and which may be considered entitled to that privilege"? What other main consideration could any sane person have in preparing a scheme for the redistribution of seats? It would be as wise to recommend the judges of our civil courts to declare by a formal resolution, that their main consideration in hearing causes should be to allow litigants an opportunity of setting forth their claims and obtaining justice. But then, on the other hand, it has to be observed that most of the resolutions which were not simple truisms embodied propositions such as no Prime Minister could possibly have expected the House to agree on without violent struggles, determined resistance, and eager divisions. The principle of rating as a basis of qualification, the device of plurality of votes, the

plan of voting by means of polling-papers—these were some of the propositions which Mr. Disraeli calmly suggested that the House should affirm along with the declarations that one party ought not to have all the power, and that the object of redistribution was to redistribute properly. The Liberal party, especially that section of it which acknowledged the authority of Mr. Bright, would have had to be beaten to its knees before it would consent to accept some of these devices.

Mr. Disraeli seems to have learned almost at once, from the demeanour of the House, that it would be hopeless to press his resolutions. On February 25 he quietly substituted for them a sort of Reform Bill, which he announced that the Government intended to introduce. The occupation franchise in boroughs was to be reduced to six pounds, and in counties to twenty pounds, in each case the qualification to be based on rating; that is, the right of a man to vote was to be made dependent on the arrangements by his local vestry or other, rate-imposing body. There were to be all manner of "fancy franchises." A man who had fifty pounds in the funds, or had thirty pounds in a savings bank and had kept that amount untouched for a year, was to be rewarded with the vote. If he had given a ten-pound note to his daughter to buy her wedding clothes; or had laid out five pounds in the burial of a poor and aged parent; or lent a sovereign to a friend in distress, he would of course be disfranchised by his improvidence. If he paid twenty shillings in direct taxes during the year he was to have a vote. If he bore the degree of a University, or was a minister of religion, a lawyer, a doctor, or a certified schoolmaster, he was to have the franchise: a whimsical sort of educational franchise which would have refused a vote to Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Mill, or to Mr. Disraeli himself. There seemed something unintelligible, or at least mysterious, about the manner in which this bill was introduced. It was to all appearance not based upon the resolutions; certainly it made no reference to some of the more important of their provisions. We need not go into the plan of redistribution which was tacked to the bill; for the bill itself never had any substantial

existence. The House of Commons received with contemptuous indifference Mr. Disraeli's explanation of its contents, and the very next day Mr. Disraeli announced that the Government had determined to withdraw it, to give up at the same time the whole plan of proceeding by resolution, and to introduce a real and substantial Reform Bill in a few days.

Parliament and the public were amazed at these sudden changes. The whole thing seemed turning into burlesque. The session had seen only a few days, and here already was a third variation in the shape of the Government's reform project. To increase the confusion and scandal it was announced three or four days after that three leading members of the Cabinet—General Peel, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Cranborne—had resigned. The whole story at last came out. The revelation was due to the "magnificent indiscretion" of Sir John Pakington, whose lucky incapacity to keep a secret has curiously enriched one chapter of the political history of his time. In consequence of the necessary reconstruction of the Cabinet, Sir John Pakington was transferred from the Admiralty to the War Office, and had to go down to his constituents of Droitwich for re-election. In the fulness of his heart he told a story which set all England laughing. The Government, it would appear, started with two distinct Reform Bills, one more comprehensive and liberal, as they considered, than the other. The latter was kept ready only as a last resource, in case the first should meet with a chilling reception from the Conservatives of the House of Commons. In that emergency they proposed to be ready to produce their less comprehensive scheme. A shopman sometimes offers a customer some article which he assures him is the only thing of the kind fit to have ; but if the customer resolutely declares that its price is more than he will pay, the shopman suddenly remembers that he has something of the same sort on hand which although cheaper will, he has no doubt, be found to serve the purpose quite as well. So the chiefs of the Conservative Cabinet had their two Reform Bills in stock. If the House should accept the extensive measure, well and good ; but in the event of their

drawing back from it, there was the other article ready to hand, cheaper to be sure, and not quite so fine to look at, but a very excellent thing in itself, and warranted to serve every purpose. The more liberal measure was to have been strictly based on the resolutions. The Cabinet met on Saturday, February 23, and then, as Sir John Pakington said, he and others were under the impression that they had come to a perfect understanding; that they were unanimous; and that the comprehensive measure was to be introduced on Monday, the 25th. On that Monday, however, the Cabinet were hastily summoned together. Sir John rushed to the spot, and a piece of alarming news awaited him. Some leading members of the Cabinet had refused point blank to have anything to do with the comprehensive bill. Here was a coil! It was two o'clock. Lord Derby had to address a meeting of the Conservative party at half-past two. Mr. Disraeli had to introduce the bill, some bill, in the House of Commons at half-past four. Something must be done. Some bill must be introduced. All eyes, we may suppose, glanced at the clock. Sir John Pakington averred that there were only ten minutes left for decision. It is plain that no man, whatever his gift of statesmanship or skill of penmanship, can draw up a complete Reform Bill in ten minutes. Now came into full light the wisdom and providence of those who had hit upon the plan of keeping a second-class bill, if we may use such an expression, ready for emergencies. Out came the second-class bill, and it was promptly resolved that Mr. Disraeli should go down to the House of Commons and gravely introduce that, as if it were the measure which the Government had all along had it in their minds to bring forward. Sir John defended that resolution with simple and practical earnestness. It was not a wise resolve, he admitted; but who can be certain of acting wisely with only ten minutes for deliberation? If they had had even an hour to think the matter over, he had no doubt, he said, that they would not have made any mistake. But what skills talking?—they had not an hour, and there was an end of the matter. They had to do something; and so Mr. Disraeli brought in his second-class measure; the

measure which Sir John Pakington's piquant explanation sent down into political history with the name of the "Ten Minutes' Bill."

The trouble arose, it seems, in this way. General Peel at first felt some scruples about the original measure, the comprehensive bill. Lord Cranborne pressed him to give the measure further consideration, and General Peel consented. So the Cabinet broke up on the evening of Saturday, February 23, in seeming harmony. Next day, however, being Sunday, Lord Cranborne, having probably nothing else to do, bethought him that it would be well to look a little into the details of the bill. He worked out the figures, as he afterwards explained, and he found that according to his calculations they would almost amount to household suffrage in some of the boroughs. That would never do, he thought; and so he tendered his resignation. This would almost, as a matter of course, involve other resignations too. Therefore there came the hasty meeting of the Cabinet on Monday, the 25th, which Sir John Pakington described with such unconscious humour. Lord Cranborne, and those who thought with him, were induced to remain, on condition that the comprehensive bill should be quietly put aside, and the ten minutes' bill as quietly substituted. Unfortunately, the reception given to the ten minutes' bill was, as we have told already, utterly discouraging. It was clear to Mr. Disraeli's experienced eye that it had not a chance from either side of the House. Mr. Disraeli made up his mind, and Lord Derby assented. There was nothing to be done but to fall back on the comprehensive measure. Unwilling colleagues must act upon their convictions and go. It would be idle to secure their co-operation by persevering further with a bill that no one would have. Therefore it was that on February 26 Mr. Disraeli withdrew his bill of the day before, the ten minutes' bill, and announced that the Government would go to work in good earnest, and bring in a real bill on March 18. This proved to be the bill based on the resolutions; the comprehensive bill, which had been suddenly put out of sight at the hasty meeting of the Cabinet on Monday, February 25, as described in the artless and unforgotten



eloquence of Sir John Pakington's Droitwich speech. Then General Peel, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Cranborne resigned their offices. Lord Carnarvon explained that he did not object to have the franchise lowered, but he objected to a measure which seemed to him to leave all the political power divided between the rich and the poor, reducing to powerlessness the influence of all the intervening classes. The objection of Lord Cranborne has already been explained. General Peel, a man of straightforward, honourable character, and good abilities, was opposed to what he regarded as the distinctly democratic character of the bill. For the second time within ten years a Conservative Cabinet had been split up on a question of Reform and the Borough Franchise.

It must be owned that it required some courage and nerve on Mr. Disraeli's part to face the House of Commons with another scheme and a newly-constructed Cabinet, after all these surprises. The first thing to do was to reorganise the Cabinet by getting a new War Secretary, Colonial Secretary, and Secretary for India. Before March 8 this was accomplished. The men who had resigned carried with them into their retirement the respect of all their political opponents. During his short administration of India, Lord Cranborne had shown not merely capacity, for that every one knew he possessed, but a gravity, self-restraint, and sense of responsibility, for which even his friends had not previously given him credit. Sir John Pakington, as we have already mentioned, became War Minister, Mr. Corry succeeding him as First Lord of the Admiralty. The Duke of Buckingham—the Lord Chandos whose maiden speech, in the great debate of Thursday, June 25, 1846, which closed the Peel Administration, Mr. Disraeli has described in his "Lord George Bentinck"—became Colonial Secretary. The administration of the India Department was transferred to Sir Stafford Northcote, whose place at the head of the Board of Trade thus vacated was taken by the Duke of Richmond.

Then, having thrown their mutineers overboard, the Government went to work again at their Reform scheme. On March 18 Mr. Disraeli introduced the bill. As regarded

the franchise, this measure proposed that in the boroughs all who paid rates, or twenty shillings a year in direct taxation, should have the vote; and also that property in the funds and savings banks, and so forth, should be honoured with the franchise; and that there should be a certain educational franchise as well. The clauses for the extension of the franchise were counterbalanced and fenced around with all manner of ingeniously devised qualifications to prevent the force of numbers among the poorer classes from having too much of its own way. There was a disheartening elaborateness of ingenuity in all these devices. The machine was far too daintily adjusted; the checks and balances were too cleverly arranged by half; it was apparent to almost every eye that some parts of the mechanism would infallibly get out of working order, and that some others would never get into it. Mr. Bright compared the whole scheme to a plan for offering something with one hand and quietly withdrawing it with the other. There was, however, one aspect of the situation which to many Reformers seemed decidedly hopeful. It was plain to them now that the Government were determined to do anything whatever in order to get a Reform Bill of some kind passed that year. They would have anything which could command a majority rather than nothing. Lord Derby afterwards frankly admitted that he did not see why a monopoly of Reform should be left to the Liberals; and Mr. Disraeli had clearly made up his mind that he would not go out of office this time on a Reform Bill. How little idea some of his colleagues had of whither they were drifting may be understood from a speech made by Lord Stanley on March 5, after the resignation of Lord Cranborne and the others. If, he said, Mr. Lowe, or any of those who sat near him, believed seriously "that it is the intention of the Government to bring in a bill which shall be in accordance with the view which has always been so ably and so consistently advocated by the member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), they are greatly mistaken." It will be seen before long that the Government consented to carry a measure going much further in the direction of democracy than anything that had been ably and

consistently advocated by the member for Birmingham. Mr. Disraeli himself could not possibly have had any idea at first of the length to which he would be induced to go. He told Lord Cranborne, and with especial emphasis, at one stage of the debates, that the Government would never introduce household suffrage pure and simple. The bill became in the end a measure to establish household suffrage pure and simple in the towns.

The leading spirits of the Government were now determined to carry a Reform Bill that session, come what would. They were partly influenced, no doubt, by the conviction that it was better to settle the question on some terms, once for all, and let the country have done with it. But, as they themselves avowed more than once, they were also influenced by the idea that if the country would have Reform, the men in office might as well keep in office and give it to them. This is not high-minded statesmanship, to be sure; but high-minded statesmanship not uncommonly conducts men out of office, instead of keeping them in it. One by one, all Mr. Disraeli's checks, balances, and securities were abandoned. The dual vote, a proposal to give a double voting power in boroughs to a ratepaying occupier who also paid 20s. of assessed taxes, was laughed out of the bill. The voting-paper principle was abandoned. The fancy franchises were swept clear away. A lodger franchise was introduced. At last it came to a struggle about the nature of the main franchise in boroughs. The bill fixed it that any one rated to the relief of the poor in a borough should have the vote, provided that he had lived two years in the house for which he was rated. An amendment, reducing the two years of qualification to one, was carried in the teeth of the Government by a large majority. The Government, therefore, agreed to accept the amendment. At various stages of the bill Mr. Disraeli kept announcing that if this or that amendment were carried against the Government, the Government would not go any further with the bill; but when the particular amendment was carried, Mr. Disraeli always announced that Ministers had changed their minds after all, and were willing to accept the new alteration. At last this little piece of

formality began to be regarded by the House as mere ceremonial. The borough franchise was now reduced to household suffrage with a qualification ; but that qualification was one of great importance. If Mr. Disraeli could succeed in inducing the House to admit the qualification, he would have good reason to say that he had kept his promise to Lord Cranborne, and that he had not consented to accept household suffrage pure and simple. The clause as it now stood excluded from the franchise the compound householder. The compound householder figures largely in the debates of that session. The controversialists on both sides battled for him, and around him, like the Greeks and Trojans fighting round the body of Patroclus. He sprang at once into prominence and into history. He and his claims were the theme of discussion and conversation everywhere. Those who did not know what the compound householder was could not possibly have understood the Reform debates of 1867. The story goes that a witty public man being asked by a French friend to explain who the compound householder was, described him as the male of the *femme incomprise*. The compound householder in plain fact was the occupier of one of the small houses the tenants of which were not themselves rated to the relief of the poor. By certain Acts of Parliament the owners of small houses were allowed to compound for their rates. The landlord became himself responsible to the parochial authorities, and not the tenant. He paid up the rates on a number of those tenements, and he received a certain reduction in consideration of his assuming the responsibility and saving the local authorities the trouble of collecting by paying up the amounts in a lump sum. As a matter of fact it need hardly be said that the occupier did actually pay the rates ; for the landlord took good care to add the amount in each case to the rent he demanded ; but the occupier's name did not appear on the rate-book, nor had he any direct dealing with the parish authorities. The compound householders were so numerous that they were said actually to constitute two-thirds of all the occupiers under £10. In some boroughs, it was stated, an occupier's franchise excluding compound householders

would suddenly reduce with sweeping hand the number of existing voters, and the Reform Bill of Lord Derby's Government would be a disfranchising, instead of an enfranchising, measure.

A meeting of the Liberal party was held at Mr. Gladstone's house to decide upon the course which should be taken. Mr. Gladstone had a device of his own to meet the difficulty. His idea was that a line should be drawn, below which houses should not be rated in any form; but that in every case where a house was rated, the occupier should be entitled to a vote, whether he or his landlord paid the rates. Mr. Gladstone was anxious that the very poorest occupiers should at once be relieved of the obligation to pay rates, and not allowed to give a vote. He, and Mr. Bright as well, were haunted by the fear of carrying the vote down too low in the social scale, and introducing to the franchise that class which Mr. Bright described as the *residuum* of the constituency. Now it must be remembered that the Liberal party, if they acted together, could command a majority. They were, therefore, in a position to compel Mr. Disraeli to adopt the principle recommended by Mr. Gladstone. But a remarkable difference of opinion suddenly sprang up. After the meeting at Mr. Gladstone's house a group made up principally of the more advanced Liberals began to doubt the advantage of Mr. Gladstone's proposed low-water line. They thought it would be better to let all householders in boroughs have the vote without distinction. They held a meeting of their own in the tea-room of the House of Commons, and they resolved to inform Mr. Gladstone that they could not support his amendment. They were known from that time forth as the "Tea-Room Party"; and they came in for nearly as much condemnation as if they had been concerned in a new Gunpowder Plot. By their secession Mr. Gladstone's scheme was defeated, and it was made certain that there were not to be two classes of householders, the rated and the unrated, in the boroughs. A bold attempt was made then to get rid of the compounding system altogether; and at length, to the surprise of all parties, the Government yielded to the pressure. They undertook to abolish the

system absolutely, to have the name of every occupier put on the rate-book, to give every occupier the vote, and, in a word, to establish household suffrage pure and simple in the borough constituencies. The Tea-Room Party had conquered both ways. They had prevailed against Mr. Gladstone, and prevailed over Mr. Disraeli.

Many hard words, as we have said, were flung at the Tea-Room Party. Mr. Bright denounced them in severe and scornful language, and asked what could be done in parliamentary politics if every man was to pursue his own little game? "A costermonger and donkey," Mr. Bright said, "would take a week to travel from here to London" (he was addressing a meeting in Birmingham); "and yet, by running athwart the London and North-Western line, they might bring to total destruction a great express train." "Thus," he went on to say, "very small men, who during their whole political lives have not advanced the question of Reform by one hair's-breadth, or by one moment in time, can at a critical hour like this, throw themselves athwart the objects of a great party, and mar, it may be, a great measure that ought to affect the interests of the country beneficially for all time." The Tea-Room Party ventured, no doubt, upon a serious parliamentary responsibility when they thus struck out a little policy for themselves independently of their leaders. Yet it can hardly be questioned now that they were in the right as regards their principle. It was a great advantage to get rid of all complications, and all various graduations of franchise, and come at once to the intelligible point of household suffrage. As Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright had themselves admitted and argued at various stages of the debates, it was decidedly objectionable to have the question of franchise mixed up with varying parochial arrangements of any kind, and left to depend on the views of a vestry here and a vestry there. Nor were the Tea-Room Party mutineers who by their conduct had enabled the enemy to triumph. On the contrary, they were at the worst only adventurous volunteers who at some risk had won a more decided victory over the enemy than their regular chiefs once ventured to think possible. Certain of them were, perhaps, a little inclined

to give themselves airs, because of the risk they had run and the success they had won. But it is only justice to some of them at least to say, that they had acted from deliberate calculation as well as from a sense of duty. They were convinced that the Government, if pressed, would give in to anything rather than allow the bill to be defeated; and they thought they saw a sudden and secure opportunity for establishing the borough franchise at once on the sound and simple basis of household suffrage.

The struggle now was practically over. The bill had become from a sham a reality; from unmeaning complication it had grown into straightforward clearness. It accomplished a great purpose by establishing a sound principle. It had gone much further in the way of pure democracy than Mr. Bright had ever proposed, or probably ever desired, to go. During the discussions Mr. Mill introduced an amendment to admit women who were registered occupiers as well as men to the franchise; in other words, to make the qualification one of occupation only, without reference to sex. The majority of the House were at first disposed to regard this proposition as something merely droll, and to deal with it only in the spirit of pleasantry, and with facetious commentary; but the debate proved a very interesting, grave, and able discussion, and it was the opening of a momentous chapter of political controversy. Mr. Mill got seventy-three members to follow him into the lobby; and although 196 voted the other way, he was probably well content with the result of the debate. He also raised the question of the representation of minorities, but he did not press it to any positive test. It had, however, a certain distinct triumph before the completion of the measure. When the bill went up to the House of Lords, Lord Cairns moved an amendment to the effect that in places returning three members no elector should vote for more than two. This amendment was carried, although Mr. Disraeli had announced beforehand that the Government thought such an arrangement would be "erroneous in principle and pernicious in practice"; and although it had been strongly opposed by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The new principle, it will be seen,

acknowledges the propriety of securing a certain proportion of representation to minorities. In a constituency with three representatives each elector votes for only two. Obviously then, the third is the representative of a minority. It does not by any means follow, however, that he is always the representative of a minority differing in political opinions from the majority. In some of the constituencies to which the bill gave three members, it so happens that there is a majority of one way of thinking large enough to secure the return of all three members. There are electors enough of one party to secure a majority to the two candidates who are especially popular, and yet to spare as many votes as will enable them to carry a third candidate also. Thus the new principle does not in practice always accomplish the object for which it was intended. Indeed, it is plain that in the very instances in which the advocates of the representation of minorities would most desire to secure it—those of places where the minority had before no chance of obtaining any expression of their views—they would still have little chance under the new arrangement, and would be most easily overborne by combination, discipline, and skill on the part of the majority. The new arrangement was of moment, however, as the first recognition of a principle which may possibly yet have a fuller development, and which if it does can hardly fail to have a serious effect on the present system of Government by party. One or two clauses of some importance, not bearing on the general question of Reform, were introduced. It was established that Parliament need not dissolve on the death of the sovereign, and that members holding places of profit from the Crown need not vacate their seats on the acceptance of another office; on their merely passing from one department to another. This was a reasonable and judicious alteration. It is of great importance that when a member of Parliament joins an Administration, he should give his constituents an opportunity of saying whether they are content to be represented by a member of the Government. But when they have answered that question in the affirmative, it can hardly be necessary to undergo the cost and trouble of a new election if their



representative happens to be transferred from one office to another. A constituency may have good reason for refusing to elect a member of the Administration; but they can hardly have any good reason for rejecting a Secretary for the Colonies whom they were willing to retain as their representative while he was Secretary for India. We are glad, however, that the change in the law was not made a little sooner. History could ill have spared Sir John Pakington's speech at his re-election for Droitwich.

The Reform Bill passed through its final stage on August 15, 1867. We may summarise its results thus concisely. It enfranchised in boroughs all male householders rated for the relief of the poor, and all lodgers resident for one year, and paying not less than £10 a year rent; and in counties, persons of property of the clear annual value of £5, and occupiers of lands or tenements paying £12 a year. It disfranchised certain small boroughs, and reduced the representation of other constituencies; it created several new constituencies; among others the borough of Chelsea and the borough of Hackney. It gave a third member to Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds; it gave a representative to the University of London. It enacted that where there were to be three representatives each elector should vote for only two candidates; and that in the City of London, which has four members, each elector should only vote for three. The Irish and Scotch Reform Bills were put off for another year. We may, however, anticipate a little, and dispose of the Scotch and Irish Bills at once, all the more because both, but especially the Irish Bill, proved to be very trivial and unsatisfactory. The Scotch Bill gave Scotland a borough franchise the same as that of England; and a county franchise based either on £5 clear annual value of property, or an occupation of £14 a year. The Government proposed at first to make the county occupation franchise the same as that in England. All qualification as to rating for the poor was, however, struck out of the bill by amendments, the rating systems of Scotland being unlike those of England. The Government then put in £14 as the equivalent of the

English occupier's £12 rating franchise. Some new seats were given to Scotland, which the Government at first proposed to get by increasing the number of members of the House of Commons, but which they were forced by amendments to obtain by the disfranchisement of some small English boroughs. The Irish Bill is hardly worth mentioning. It left the county franchise as it was, £12, reduced the borough franchise from £8 to £4, and did nothing in the way of redistribution.

While the English Reform Bill was passing through its several stages, the Government went deliberately out of their way to make themselves again ridiculous with regard to the public meetings in Hyde Park. The Reform League convened a public meeting to be held in that park on May 6. Mr. Walpole, on May 1, issued a proclamation intended to prevent the meeting, and warning all persons not to attend it. The League took legal advice, found that their meeting would not be contrary to law, and accordingly issued a counter proclamation asserting their right, and declaring that the meeting would be held in order to maintain it. • The Government found out a little too late that the League had strict law on their side. The law gave to the Crown control over the parks, and the right of prosecuting trespassers of any kind ; but it gave the Administration no power to anticipate trespass from the holding of a public meeting, and to prohibit it in advance. The meeting was held ; it was watched by a large body of police and soldiers ; but it passed over very quietly, and indeed to curious spectators looking for excitement seemed a very humdrum sort of affair. Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, who had long been growing weary of the thankless troubles of his office at a time of such excitement, and who was not strong enough to face the difficulties of the hour, resigned his post. Mr. Walpole retained, however, his seat in the Cabinet. "He will sit on these benches," said Mr. Disraeli, in announcing to the House of Commons his colleague's resignation of the Home Office ; "and although not a Minister of the Crown, he will be one of her Majesty's responsible advisers." He was a man highly esteemed by all parties ; a man of high principle

and of amiable character. But he was not equal to the occasion when any difficulty arose, and he contrived to put himself almost invariably in the wrong when dealing with the Reform League. He exerted his authority at a wrong time, and in a wrong way; and he generally withdrew from his wrong position in somewhat too penitent and humble an attitude. He strained too far the authority of his place, and he did not hold high enough its dignity. He was succeeded in office by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who left the Poor Law Board to become Home Secretary.

The Reform Bill then was passed. The "Leap in the Dark" was taken. Thus did the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, describe the policy of himself and his colleagues. The phrase has become historical, and its authorship is invariably ascribed to Lord Derby. It was in fact Lord Cranborne who first used it. During the debates in the House of Commons he had taunted the Government with taking a leap in the dark. Lord Derby adopted the expression, and admitted it to be a just description of the movement which he and his Ministry had made. It is impossible to deny that the Government acted sagaciously in settling the question so promptly and so decisively; in agreeing to almost anything rather than postpone the settlement of the controversy even for another year. But one is still lost in wonder at the boldness, the audacity, with which the Conservative Government threw away in succession every principle which they had just been proclaiming essential to Conservatism, and put on Radicalism as a garment. On a memorable occasion Mr. Disraeli said that Peel caught the Whigs bathing and walked away with their clothes. Now he himself had ventured on a still less scrupulous act of spoliation. He helped to turn the Whigs out of their clothes in order that he might get into the garments. Nothing could have been more surprising than the courage with which he undertook the series of transformations, unless, perhaps, the elaborate simplicity with which towards the end he represented himself as one who was acting in the truest spirit of consistency. Few could help being impressed, or at least being imposed upon, by the calm earnestness of his declarations. Juvenal's Greek

deceived the very eyesight of the spectators by the cleverness of his personation. Mr. Disraeli was almost equally successful. The success was not, perhaps, likely to conduce to an exalted political morality. The one thing, however, which most people were thinking of in the autumn of 1867 was that the Reform question was settled at last, and for a long time. Nothing more would be heard of the unenfranchised millions and the noble working man, on the one hand; of the swart mechanic's bloody thumbs and the reign of anarchy, on the other. Mr. Lowe is entitled to the last word of the controversy. The working men, the majority, the people who live in the small houses, are enfranchised; "we must now," Mr. Lowe said, "at least educate our new masters."

## CHAPTER LIII

### THE FENIAN MOVEMENT

THE session of Parliament which passed the Reform Bill was not many days over when the country was startled by the news that a prison van had been stopped and broken open under broad day in Manchester, and two political prisoners rescued from the custody of the police. The political prisoners were Fenians. We have spoken already of the Fenian movement as one of the troubles now gathering around the path of successive Governments. It was at an early period of Lord Russell's administration that the public first heard anything substantial about the movement. On February 16, 1866, Parliament was surprised not a little by an announcement which the Government had to make. Lord Russell told the House of Lords, and Sir George Grey announced to the House of Commons, that the Government intended to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland, and that both Houses of Parliament were to be called together next day for the purpose of enabling the Ministry to carry out this resolve. The next day was Saturday, an unusual day for a parliamentary

sitting at an early part of the session ; unusual, indeed, when the session had only just begun. The Government could only excuse such a summons to the Lords and Commons on the plea of absolute urgency ; and the word soon went round in the lobbies that a serious discovery had been made ; and that a conspiracy of a formidable nature was preparing a rebellion in Ireland. The two Houses met next day, and a measure was introduced to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland, and give the Lord-Lieutenant almost unlimited power to arrest and detain suspected persons. The measure was run through its three readings in both Houses in the course of the day. The House of Lords had to keep up their sitting until the document should arrive from Osborne to authorise the Commissioners to give the Queen's assent to the bill. The Lords, therefore, having discussed the subject sufficiently to their satisfaction at a comparatively early hour of the evening, suspended the sitting until eleven at night. They then resumed, and waited patiently for the authority to come from Osborne, where the Queen was staying. Shortly before midnight the needful authority arrived, and the bill became law at twenty minutes before one o'clock on Sunday morning.

It seems almost superfluous to say that such a bill was not allowed to pass without some comment, and even some opposition, in the House of Commons. Mr. Bright made a speech which has always since been regarded as in every sense one of the very finest he ever delivered. That was the speech in which he declared his conviction that "if the majority of the people of Ireland, counted fairly out, had their will and had the power, they would unmoor the island from its fastenings in the deep, and move it at least two thousand miles to the west." That was in itself a sufficiently humiliating confession for an English statesman to have to make. It was not humiliating to Mr. Bright personally ; for he had always striven to obtain such legislation for Ireland as should enable her to feel that hers was a friendly partnership with England, and not a compulsory and unequal connection. But it was humbling to any Englishman of spirit and sense to have

to acknowledge that after so many years and centuries of experiment and failure, the Government of England had not yet learned the way to keep up the connection between the countries without coercion acts and measures of repression in Ireland. No Englishman who puts the question fairly to his conscience will deny that if he were considering a matter that concerned a foreign country and a foreign Government, he would regard the mere fact as a condemnation of its system of rule. It would be idle to try to persuade him that it was all the fault of the Poles if the Russians had to govern by force in Poland; all the fault of the Venetians if the Austrians could never get beyond an encampment in Venetia. His strong common sense, unclouded in such a case by prejudice, would at once enable him to declare with conviction, that where, after long trial, a State cannot govern a population except by sheer force, the cause must be sought in the badness of the governing system rather than in the perversity of human nature among the governed. Mr. Mill, who spoke in the same debate, put the matter effectively enough when he observed that if the captain of a ship, or the master of a school, has continually to have recourse to violent measures to keep crew or boys in order, we assume, without asking for further evidence, that there is something wrong in his system of management. Mr. Mill dwelt with force and justice on one possible explanation of the difficulty which English Governments seem always to encounter in Ireland. He spoke of the "eternal political *non possumus*" which English statesmen opposed to every special demand for legislation in Ireland; a *non possumus* which, as he truly said, only means, "We don't do it in England."

The *Habeas Corpus* Act was, therefore, suspended once more in Ireland. The Government acknowledged that they had to deal with a new rebellion in that country. The rebellion this time might have sprung up from the ground, so suddenly did the knowledge of it seem to have come upon the vast majority of the public here. Yet there had for a long time been symptoms enough to give warning of such a movement, and it soon proved

to be formidable to a degree which not many even then suspected.

The Fenian movement differed from nearly all previous movements of the same kind in Ireland, in that it arose and grew into strength without the patronage or the help of any of those who might be called the natural leaders of the people. In 1798 and in 1848 the rebellion bore unmistakably the "follow-my-leader" character. Some men of great ability, or strength of purpose, or high position, or all attributes combined, made themselves leaders, and the others followed. In 1798 the rising had the impulse of almost intolerable personal as well as national grievance; but it is doubtful whether any formidable and organised movement might have been made but for the leadership of such men as Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. In 1848 there were such impulses as the traditional leadership of Smith O'Brien, the indomitable purpose of Mitchel, and the impassioned eloquence of Meagher. But Fenianism seemed to have sprung out of the very soil of Ireland itself. Its leaders were not men of high position, or distinguished name, or proved ability. They were not of aristocratic birth; they were not orators; they were not powerful writers. It was not the impulse of the American Civil War that engendered Fenianism; although that war had great influence on the manner in which Fenianism shaped its course. Fenianism had been in existence, in fact, although it had not got its peculiar name, long before the American War created a new race of Irishmen—the Irish-American soldiers—to turn their energies and their military inclination to a new purpose.

Agitation in the form of secret association had never ceased in Ireland. One result of prosecutions for seditious speaking and writing in Ireland is invariably the encouragement of secret combination. Whether it be right or wrong, necessary or unnecessary, to prosecute for seditious speaking or writing in Ireland, is not a matter with which we have to concern ourselves when we make this statement. We state a fact which cannot be controverted. It is assuredly a fact to be taken into the gravest consideration

by those who are entrusted with the maintenance of order. It ought at least to impress them with a sense of the necessity for being cautious how they run the risk of Government prosecutions for mere indiscretions of pen or tongue. "When popular discontents are abroad," said Curran, condemning the policy of the Irish administration of his day, "a wise Government would put them into a hive of glass; you hid them." The suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, in consequence of the 1848 movement, led, as a matter of course, to secret association. Before the trials of the Irish leaders were well over in that year, a secret association was formed by a large number of young Irishmen in cities and towns. It was got up by young men of good character and education; it spread from town to town; it was conducted with the most absolute secrecy; it had no informer in its ranks. It had its oath of fidelity and its regular leaders, its nightly meetings, and even to a limited and cautious extent its nightly drillings. It was a failure, because in the nature of things it could not be anything else. The young men had not arms enough anywhere to render them formidable in any one place; and the necessity of carrying on their communications with different towns in profound secrecy, and by round-about ways of communication, made a prompt concerted action impossible. After two or three attempts to arrange for a simultaneous rising had failed, or had ended only in little abortive and isolated ebullitions, the young men became discouraged. Some of the leaders went to France, some to the United States, some actually to England; and the association melted away. That was the happiest end it could possibly have had. Concerted action would only have meant the useless waste of a few scores or hundreds of brave young lives. Some years after this, the "Phoenix" clubs began to be formed in Ireland. They were for the most part associations of the peasant class, and were on that account, perhaps, the more formidable and earnest; for the secret association of which we have already spoken was mainly the creation of young men of a certain culture who felt ashamed and disappointed that the Young Ireland movement



should have ended without a more gallant display of arms. The Phoenix clubs led to some of the ordinary prosecutions and convictions; and that was all. Up to that time it did not seem to have entered into the mind of any official English statesman that such things might possibly be a consequence and not a cause. It was thought enough to put them down and punish them when they came. It was accounted an offence against law and order hardly less flagrant than that of the secret agitators themselves to ask whether, perhaps, there was not some real cause for all this agitation, with which serious statesmanship could easily deal if it only took a little honest thought and trouble. After the Phoenix associations came the Fenians. "This is a serious business now," said a clever English literary man when he heard of the Fenian organisation; "the Irish have got hold of a good name this time; the Fenians will last." The Fenians are said to have been the ancient Irish militia. In Scott's "Antiquary," Hector M'Intyre, jealous for the honour and the genuineness of Ossian's songs of Selma, recites a part of one in which Ossian asks St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, whether he ventures to compare his psalms "to the tales of the bare-armed Fenians." There can be no doubt that the tales of the bare-armed Fenians were passed from mouth to mouth of the Celts in Ireland and the highlands of Scotland, from a time long before that at which any soothsayer or second-sighted sage could have dreamed of the landing of Strongbow and the perfidy of the wife of Breffni. There was an air of Celtic antiquity and of mystery about the name of Fenian which merited the artistic approval given to it by the impartial English writer whose observation has just been quoted. The Fenian agitation began about 1858, and it came to perfection about the middle of the American Civil War. It was ingeniously arranged on a system by which all authority converged towards one centre, and those farthest away from the seat of direction knew proportionately less and less about the nature of the plans. They had to obey instructions only, and it was hoped that by this means weak or doubtful men would not have it in their power

prematurely to reveal, to betray, or to thwart the purposes of their leaders. A convention was held in America, and the Fenian Association was resolved into a regular organised institution. A provisional government was established in the neighbourhood of Union Square, New York, with all the array and the mechanism of an actual working administration. Soon after this there began to be frequent visitations of mysterious strangers to Ireland.

The emigration of the Irish to America had introduced an entirely new element into political calculations. One of the men of 1848, who took refuge in the United States at first, and who afterwards went to Canada and became very influential there, wrote home from New York to say that "we have the long arm of the lever here." There was much truth in this view of the state of things. The Irish grew rapidly in numbers and in strength all over the United States. The constitutional system adopted there enabled them almost at once to become citizens of the Republic. They availed themselves of this privilege almost universally. The American political system, whatever may be thought of its various merits or defects, is peculiarly adapted to fill the populations with a quick interest in politics. There are undoubtedly certain classes among the wealthier who are so engrossed in money-making and in business as to have little time left to trouble themselves about politics; and there are many who, out of genuine or affected distaste for noisy controversy and the crowd, hold aloof deliberately from all political organisations. But the working part of the community, especially in the cities, are almost invariably politicians. Every election, every political trial of strength, has its practical beginning at the primary meetings of the electors of each place. These meetings are attended largely, one might almost say mainly, by the humbler classes of voters. From the primary meeting to the fall elections, and from the ordinary fall elections to the choice of the President, the system is so adjusted as to take the humblest voter along with it. The Irish working man, who had never probably had any chance of giving a vote in his own country, found himself in the United States a person of political power, whose vote was courted by the

leaders of different parties, and whose sentiments were flattered by the wire-pullers of opposing factions. He was not slow to appreciate the value of this influence in its bearing on that political question which in all the sincerity of his American citizenship was still the dearest to his heart—the condition of Ireland. In the United States—we do not say in Canada—the differences between Irishmen of different religions and factions have not much interfered with their views on purely Irish questions. Dislike of England, or at least of English governments, prevails among many Irishmen from the northern province settled in the United States, who assuredly, if they had remained at home, would have brought up their children in devotion to English rule and the traditions of the house of Orange. But of course the vast, the overwhelming majority of the Irish in America is made up of men who have come from the provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, and whose anti-English sentiments have only become stronger and stronger in proportion to the length of time and distance that divided them from their old home. If it were to be distinctly declared that every Irishman in the United States was in his heart an enemy of England, there might probably be found instances enough the other way to discredit the literary accuracy of the assertion. But we know with what contempt Dr. Johnson spoke of the literal accuracy which replied to the statement that a certain orchard contained no fruit, by showing that it actually had three apples and four pears. To all who do not insist on that sort of accuracy it will be proper to say that, speaking generally, all the Irish population in the United States is animated by feelings of hostility to English dominion in Ireland. Filled with this feeling the Irish in the States made their political organisations the means of keeping up a constant agitation, having for its object to secure the co-operation of American parties in some designs against England. One of the great political parties into which the Northern States were divided made it a part of their electioneering business to conciliate the Irish vote in the populous cities. They professed great affection for Ireland and sympathy with Irish grievances ;

they gave the word of order to their American followers to patronise the Irish ; their leaders were often to be seen on the platform at Irish meetings ; the municipal authorities of some of the great towns took part in the Irish processions on St. Patrick's Day ; more than once the American mayor of an American city exhibited himself arrayed in garments of green on that anniversary. The Irish vote was at one time absolutely necessary to the democratic party in the States ; and the democratic party were ready to give a seeming countenance to any scheme which happened for the moment to allure the hopes of the Irish populations. After the Civil War the feelings of almost all the political parties in the States, in the South as well as in the North, were hostile to England. At such a moment, and under such a condition of things, it cannot be matter of surprise if the hopes of the Irish populations were excited to the highest degree. The confidence felt by so many persons in this country that the *Alabama* controversy had been dropped for ever by American statesmen, had not the slightest support from the bearing or resolve of any of the great American parties. It is quite easy to imagine a condition of things just then, which would have led a light-hearted American president to try to bring together all classes of the American population in a war against England. The length of the almost indefensible Canadian frontier line would have given America the immense advantage of being able to choose her own battle ground. Such a war would at one time have been welcomed with enthusiasm all over the States. The objections of calm and cautious minds would have been borne down and swept away in a very wave of popular passion. It is not surprising if, under such circumstances, many of the Fenian leaders in America should have thought it easy to force the hand of the Government, and to bring on a war with England. At all events, it is not surprising if they should have believed that the American Government would put forth little effort to prevent the Fenians from using the frontier of the United States as a basis of operations against England.

The Civil War had introduced a new figure to the world's

stage. This was the Irish-American soldier. He had the bright, humorous countenance of the Celt, with the peculiar litheness and military swagger of the American "boy in blue." He had some of the American shrewdness grafted on to his Irish love of adventure. In thousands of cases he spoke with an American accent, and had never set foot on the soil of that Ireland from which his fathers came, and which, to do him justice, he loved with a passion at once romantic and sincere. He might have fought for the North, or he might have fought for the South. He might have ranged himself under the colours borne by Thomas Francis Meagher—"Meagher of the Sword"—or he might have followed the fearless lead of "Pat Cleburne." Perhaps he was one of the Irish brigade who joined in the desperate charges up the heights of Fredericksburg; or perhaps he was one of the equally brave men who successfully held those heights for the South. It was all the same when the interests of Ireland came to be concerned: he was ready to forget all differences in a companionship on that question. Many of these men—thousands of them—were as sincerely patriotic in their way as they were simple and brave. It is needless to say that they were fastened on in some instances by adventurers, who fomented the Fenian movement out of the merest and the meanest self-seeking. Men swaggered about Union Square, New York, as Fenian leaders, who had not the faintest notion of risking their own valuable lives in any quarrel more dignified than a bar-room row in the Sixth Ward—the "Big Sixth" of New York. Some were making a living out of the organisation—out of that, and apparently nothing else. The contributions given by poor Irish hack-drivers and servant girls, in the sincere belief that they were helping to man the ranks of an Irish army of independence, enabled some of these self-appointed leaders to wear fine clothes and to order expensive dinners. Of course something of this kind is to be said of every such organisation. It is especially likely to be true of any organisation got up in a country like America, where the field of agitation is open to everybody alike, with little of authority or prescription to govern the taking of places. But in the main, it is only fair to say that the Fenian

movement in the United States was got up, organised, and manned by persons who, however they may have been mistaken as to their ends and misguided as to their means, were single-hearted, unselfish, and faithfully devoted to their cause. It is necessary that this should be said somewhat emphatically; for the mind of the English public has always been curiously misled with regard to the character of the Fenian organisation. In this, as in other instances, the public conscience of England has too often been lulled to sleep by the assurance that all who reject the English point of view must be either fools or knaves, and that there is no occasion for sensible men to take any account of their demands or their protestations. It may be well, too, to emphasise the fact that the plans of the Fenians were not by any means the fantastically foolish projects that it is the custom here to believe them. They resembled in some respects the projects of the Polish insurgents, which we have described in another chapter of this work. Like the Polish schemes they were founded on calculations which did not turn out as might have been expected, but which, nevertheless, might very easily have come right. The Polish rebellion was started in the hope that some of the European powers would come to the help of Poland; and no European power did come to its help. But there was at one time, as we know now, a very great chance indeed that such help would be strongly given. The Fenian rising was inspired by the hope that the United States and England would be at war; and we know now that they were more than once on the very verge of war. It is, we believe, quite certain that the officers were already named by the American authorities who were to have conducted an invasion of Canada. Those who did not happen to have known America and American life in the days shortly after the close of the Civil War, can have hardly any idea of the bitterness of feeling against England that prevailed then all over the States, in the South just as much as in the North. If the English Government had peremptorily and absolutely rejected the idea of arbitration with regard to the *Alabama* claims, at any time between 1865 and 1868, it is all but certain that America would have

declared war. An American invasion of Canada would have made a Fenian rising in Ireland a very different trouble from that which under the actual conditions it afterwards proved to be.

Meanwhile there began to be a constant mysterious influx of strangers into Ireland. They were strangers who for the most part had Celtic features and the bearing of American soldiers. They distributed themselves throughout the towns and villages; most of them had relatives or old friends here and there, to whom they told stories of the share they had had in the big wars across the Atlantic and of the preparations that were making in the States for the accomplishment of Irish independence. All this time the Fenians in the States were filling the columns of friendly journals with accounts of the growth of their organisation and announcements of the manner in which it was to be directed to its purpose. After a while things went so far that the Fenian leaders in the United States issued an address, announcing that their officers were going to Ireland to raise an army there for the recovery of the country's independence. Of course the Government here were soon quite prepared to receive them; and indeed the authorities easily managed to keep themselves informed by means of spies of all that was going on in Ireland. The spy system was soon flourishing in full force. Every considerable gathering of Fenians had amongst its numbers at least one person who generally professed a yet fiercer devotion to the cause than any of the rest, and who was in the habit of carrying to Dublin Castle every night his official report of what his Fenian colleagues had been doing. It is positively stated that in one instance a Protestant detective in the pay of the Government actually passed himself off as a Catholic, and took the Sacrament openly in a Catholic church in order to establish his Catholic orthodoxy in the eyes of his companions. One need not be a Catholic in order to understand the grossness of the outrage which conduct like this must seem to be in the eyes of all who believe in the mysteries of the Catholic faith. Meanwhile the Head Centre of Fenianism in America, James Stephens, who had borne a part in the movement of 1848, arrived

in Ireland. He was arrested in company of Mr. James Kickham, the author of many poems of great sweetness and beauty; a man of pure and virtuous character. Stephens was committed to Richmond Prison, Dublin, early in November 1865; but before many days had passed the country was startled by the news that he had contrived to make his escape. The escape was planned with skill and daring. For a time it helped to strengthen the impression on the mind of the Irish peasantry that in Stephens there had at last been found an insurgent leader of adequate courage, craft, and good fortune.

Stephens disappeared for a moment from the stage. In the meantime disputes and dissensions had arisen among the Fenians in America. The schism had gone so far as to lead to the setting up of two separate associations. There were of course distracted plans. One party was for an invasion of Canada; another pressed for operations in Ireland itself. The Canadian attempt actually was made. A small body of Fenians, a sort of advance-guard, crossed the Niagara river on the night of May 31, 1866, occupied Fort Erie, and drove back the Canadian volunteers who first advanced against them. For a moment a gleam of success shone on the attempt; but the United States enforced the neutrality of their frontier lines with a sudden energy and strictness wholly unexpected by the Fenians. They prevented any further crossing of the river, and arrested several of the leaders on the American side. The Canadian authorities hurried up reinforcements; several Fenians were taken and shot; others recrossed the river, and the invasion scheme was over.

Then Stephens came to the front again. It was only for a moment. He had returned to New York, and he now announced that he was determined to strike a blow in Ireland. Before long the impression was spread abroad that he had actually left the States to return to the scene of his proposed insurrection. The American-Irish kept streaming across the Atlantic, even in the stormy winter months, in the firm belief that before the winter had passed away, or at the farthest while the spring was yet young, Stephens would appear in Ireland at the head of an



insurgent army. Not many, surely, of those actually living in Ireland could have had any faith in the possibility of such a movement having even a momentary success on Irish soil. All who knew anything of the condition of the country must have known that the peasantry were unarmed, and utterly unprepared for any such attempt; that the great majority of the populations everywhere were entirely opposed to such wild enterprises; that the Catholic clergy especially were endeavouring everywhere to keep their people back from secret organisation or insurrectionary scheme. But the Irish-Americans, who had made their way into Ireland, were for the most part not acquainted with the condition of the country; and it was owing to their presence and their influence that at length an attempt at rebellion was actually made. Stephens did not reappear in Ireland. He made no attempt to keep his warlike promise. He may be said to have disappeared from the history of Fenianism. But the preparations had gone too far to be suddenly stopped. Many of his followers were filled with shame at the collapse of the enterprise on which they had risked so much, and they were impatient to give some sign of their personal energy and sincerity. It was hastily decided that something should be done. One venture was a scheme for the capture of Chester Castle. The plan was that a sufficient number of the Fenians in England should converge towards the ancient town of Chester, should suddenly appear there on a given day in February 1867, capture the castle, seize the arms they found there, cut the telegraph wires, make for Holyhead, but a short distance by rail, seize on some vessels there, and then steam for the Irish coast. The Government were fully informed of the plot in advance; the police were actually on the look-out for the arrival of strangers in Chester, and the enterprise melted away. In March 1867 an attempt at a general rising was made in Ireland. It was a total failure; the one thing on which the country had to be congratulated was that it failed so completely and so quickly as to cause little bloodshed. Every influence combined to minimise the waste of life. The snow fell that spring as it had scarcely ever fallen before in the soft, mild

climate of Ireland. Silently, unceasingly it came down all day long and all night long ; it covered the roads and the fields ; it made the gorges of the mountains untenable, and the gorges of the mountains were to be the encampments and the retreats of the Fenian insurgents. The snow fell for many days and nights, and when it ceased falling the insurrectionary movement was over. The insurrection was literally buried in that unlooked-for snow. There were some attacks on police barracks in various places—in Cork, in Kerry, in Limerick, in Tipperary, in Louth ; there were some conflicts with the police ; there were some shots fired, many captures made, a few lives lost ; and then for the time at least all was over. The Fenian attempt thus made had not from the beginning a shadow of hope to excuse it. Every patriotic Irishman of whatever party must have felt a sense of relief when it was evident that the insurrection was over and that so little harm had been done.

There was, however, much feeling in England as well as in Ireland for some of the Fenian leaders who now began to be put upon their trials. They bore themselves with manliness and dignity. Some of them had been brave soldiers in the American Civil War, and were entitled to wear honourable marks of distinction. Many had given up a successful career or a prosperous calling in the United States to take part in what they were led to believe would be the great national uprising of the Irish people. They spoke up with courage in the dock, and declared their perfect readiness to die for what they held to be a sacred cause. They indulged in no bravado and uttered no word of repining. All manhood should have deserted the English heart if the English people did not acknowledge some admiration for such men. Many did acknowledge such admiration freely and generously. The newspaper in London which most of all addresses itself to the gratification of the popular passion of the hour, frankly declared that the Fenian leaders were entitled to the respect of Englishmen because they had given such earnest of their sincerity, and such proof that they knew how to die. One of the leaders, Colonel Burke, who had served with distinction in the army of the Southern Confederation, was sentenced to

death in May 1867. A great public meeting was held in St. James's Hall, London, to adopt a memorial praying that the sentence might not be carried out. Among those who addressed the meeting was Mr. Mill. It was almost altogether an English meeting. The hall was crowded with English working men. The Irish element had hardly any direct representation there. Yet there was absolute unanimity, there was intense enthusiasm, in favour of the mitigation of the sentence on Colonel Burke and his companions. The great hall rang with cheer after cheer as Mr. Mill, in a voice made stronger than its wont by the intensity of his emotions, pleaded for a policy of mercy. It is satisfactory to be able to say that the voice of that great meeting was heard in the ministerial councils, and that the sentence of death was not inflicted.

Not many months after this event the world was aroused to amazement by the news of the daring rescue of Fenian prisoners in Manchester. Two Fenian prisoners, named Kelly and Deasy, were being conveyed in the prison van from one of the police courts to the borough gaol to await further examination. On the way the van was stopped by a number of armed Fenians, who demanded the surrender of the prisoners. They surrounded the van, and endeavoured to break in the door of it. The door was locked on the inside, and the key was in the keeping of a police officer, Brett, who sat within. A shot was fired at the keyhole, probably in the hope of blowing off the lock—this was the opinion of one at least of the police who gave evidence—and poor Brett was just in the way of the bullet. The unfortunate policeman, who was only preparing to do his duty bravely by refusing to give up his charge, and by defending his position to the last, received a wound of which he died soon after. The doors were then opened, a woman prisoner in the van handing out the keys which she found in the pocket of the unfortunate officer; and the prisoners were rescued. "Kelly, I'll die for you!" was the exclamation heard to be uttered by one of the Fenian rescuers. He kept his word.

The rescue was accomplished; the prisoners were hurried away, and were never after seen by English officials. The

principal rescuers died for them. Several men were put on their trial for the murder of Brett. Five were found guilty: their names were Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon or Shore, and Maguire. Allen was a young fellow—a mere lad under twenty. The defence was that the prisoners only meditated a rescue, and that the death of the policeman was but an accident. It should be said, also, that each of those who avowed having taken part in the rescue, denied that he had fired the fatal shot. Legally, of course, this would have availed them nothing. Shots were fired. Those who take part in an unlawful assemblage for an unlawful purpose, become responsible for the acts of their confederates. But it is worth noting as a fact that the men who gloried in the rescue, and died glorying in it, declared to the last that they had not fired the shot which killed Brett. All the five were sentenced to death. Then followed an almost unprecedented occurrence. One of the five, Maguire, had simply pleaded in his defence that he had been arrested by mistake; that he never was near the spot on the day of the rescue; that he was a loyal private in the Marines, and no Fenian; that he never knew anything about the plot or heard of it until he was arrested. The jury convicted him along with all the others. But the reporters for the press had been so struck with the apparent genuineness of the man's defence, that they took the unprecedented step of joining in a memorial to the Government, expressing their conviction that in his case the finding of the jury was a mistake. The Government made inquiry, and it was found that Maguire's defence was a truth, and that his arrest was a mere blunder. He received a pardon at once, that being the only way in which he could be extricated from the effect of the mistaken verdict. Naturally the news of this singular miscarriage of justice threw a great doubt on the soundness of the verdict in the other cases. Many strenuous attempts were made to procure a commutation of the sentence. Mr. Bright exerted himself with characteristic energy and humanity. Mr. Swinburne, the poet, made an appeal to the people of England in lines of great power and beauty on behalf of a policy of mercy to the prisoners. Lord Derby, who had then come to be at the head of the

Government, refused to listen to any appeal. He declared that it was not a political offence, but simply a murder, commonplace in everything save its peculiar atrocity. He was even ungenerous enough to declare that the act for which he had determined that the men should die was a "dastardly" deed. This was not merely a superfluous piece of ungenerosity; it was simply a misapplication of words. A minister of the Crown might well denounce, in the strongest language that could be made appropriate to the occasion, so lawless an act as that for which Allen and his companions were condemned; but there was no excuse for calling it dastardly. The conduct of a handful of men, who stopped a police-van in a great city and at the risk of their own lives rescued some of their political heroes from custody, proclaiming at the same time their readiness to die for the deed, might be called lawless, might even be called criminal; but if words have any meaning at all, it could not be called dastardly. We can easily test the question, if we do not maintain the creed that the moral laws change according as they are applied by different persons. Let us suppose that, instead of the rescue of two Fenians in Manchester, Lord Derby had been talking of the rescue of two Garibaldians in Rome. Let us suppose that the Papal police were carrying off two of the followers of Garibaldi to a Roman prison, and that a few Garibaldians stopped the van in open day, and within reach of the whole force of the Papal gendarmes, broke the van open and rescued the prisoners, and that in the affray one of the Papal police was killed. Does anybody suppose that Lord Derby would have stigmatised the conduct of the rescuing Garibaldians as dastardly? Is it not more likely that, even if he yielded so far to official proprieties as to call it misguided, he would have qualified his disapprobation by declaring that it was also heroic?

One other of the five prisoners who were convicted together escaped the death-sentence. This was Condon or Shore, an American by citizenship if not by birth. He had undoubtedly been concerned in the attempt at rescue; but for some reason a distinction was made between him and the others. This act of mercy, in itself highly

commendable, added to the bad effect produced in Ireland by the execution of the other three men; for it gave rise to the belief that Shore had been spared only because the protection of the American Government might have been invoked on his behalf. The other three, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, were executed. They all met death with courage and composure. It would be superfluous to say that their deaths did not discourage the spirit of Fenianism. On the contrary, they gave it a new lease of life.

Indeed, the execution of these men did not even tend to prevent crime. The excitement caused by the attempt they had made and the penalty they paid had hardly died away when a crime of a peculiarly atrocious nature was committed in the name of Fenianism. On November 23, 1867, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien were hanged at Manchester. On December 13 an attempt was made to blow up the House of Detention at Clerkenwell. About four o'clock that day all London was startled by a shock and a sound resembling the distant throb of an earthquake or the blowing up of a powder-magazine. The explanation soon came. Two Fenian prisoners were in the Clerkenwell House of Detention, and some sympathisers outside had attempted to rescue them by placing a barrel of gunpowder close to the wall of the prison, and exploding the powder by means of a match and a fuse. About sixty yards of the prison wall were blown in, and numbers of small houses in the neighbourhood were shattered to pieces. Six persons were killed on the spot; about six more died from the effects of the injuries they received; some hundred and twenty persons were wounded. Forty premature confinements were the consequence of the shock received by women, and twenty of the babes died in their birth. The clumsiness of the crime was only surpassed by its atrocity. Had the prisoners on whose behalf the attempt was made been near the wall at the time, they must have shared the fate of those who were victimised outside. Had they even been taking exercise in the yard, they would, in all probability, have been killed. They would have been taking exercise at the time had it not been for a warning

the authorities at Scotland Yard received two days before, to the effect that an attempt at rescue was to be made by means of gunpowder and the blowing in of the wall. In consequence of this warning the governor of the prison had the prisoners confined to their cells that day; and thus, in all probability, they owed their lives to the disclosure of the secret plan which their officious and ill-omened admirers had in preparation for their rescue. Why the prison authorities and the police, thus forewarned, did not keep a sufficient watch upon the line of prison wall to prevent the possibility of any such scheme being put into execution, it passes the wit of man to comprehend. At the very time that this horrible crime and blunder was perpetrated, one of the London theatres was nightly crowded by spectators eager to see an Irish melodrama, among the incidents of which was the discussion of a plan for the rescue of a prisoner from a castle cell. The audience were immensely amused by the proposal of one confederate to blow up the castle altogether, and the manner in which it occurred to the simple plotters, just in time, that if they carried out this plan they must send the prisoner himself flying into the air. The Clerkenwell conspirators had either not seen the popular drama or had missed the point of its broadest joke.

Five men and a woman were put on trial for the crime. The Chief Justice, before whom the charge was tried, directed the withdrawal of the proceedings against the woman and one of the men, as there seemed to be no case against them. Three others were acquitted after a long trial; one man was convicted. Unfortunately for the moral effect of the conviction, the man was found guilty on the evidence of an informer; and a very strong attempt had been made to prove that the prisoner was not in London at all at the time when he was charged with the commission of the crime. A sort of official but extra-judicial inquiry took place as to the validity of the plea of *alibi*, and the result was that the Chief Justice and the authorities at the Home Office declared themselves satisfied with the verdict. Mr. Bright raised the question in the House of Commons, and urged a further delay of

the execution; but he was answered with the assurance that no doubt was any longer felt as to the propriety of the verdict. The man was executed. So far as it is possible to judge, the persons who were concerned in the plot to blow in the prison wall appear to have been of that irresponsible crew who hang on to the skirts of all secret political associations, and whose adhesion is only one other reason for regarding such associations as deplorable and baneful. Such men are of the class who bring a curse, who bring many curses, on even the best cause that strives to work in secret. They prowl after the heels of organised conspiracy, and what it will not do they are ready in some fatal moment to attempt. It would be the merest injustice to deny that among the recognised leaders of the Fenian movement were men of honourable feeling and sincere although misguided patriotism. It would be as cruel and as unjust to suppose that these men could have had any sympathy with such an outrage as that which destroyed the innocent women and children at Clerkenwell. But the political conspirator may well pause, before entering on his schemes, to reflect that an authority exercised in secret can never be sure of making itself thoroughly felt, and of preventing some desperate follower from undertaking on his own account a deed which his leaders would never have sanctioned. If no other reason existed, this thought alone might be enough to set men's hearts against secret political confederation.

It is not necessary to follow out the steps of the Fenian movement any further. There were many isolated attempts; there were many arrests, trials, imprisonments, banishments. The effect of all this, it must be stated as a mere historical fact, was only to increase the intensity of dissatisfaction and discontent among the Irish peasantry. It is curious to notice how entirely Irish in its character the movement was, and how little sympathy it gave to or got from the movements of Continental revolution. In one or two instances some restless soldier of universal democracy found his way from the Continent to place his services at the disposal of the Fenians. The alliance was



never successful. The stranger did not like the Irish ; the Irish did not take to the stranger. Their ways were different. The Irish people, and more especially the Irish peasantry, failed altogether to be captivated by the prospect of the "democratic and social republic." They did not even understand what was meant by the vague grandeur of the phraseology which describes the supposed common cause as "the Revolution." Eloquence about the solidarity of peoples was lost on them. The most extreme of them only dreamed of the independence of Ireland ; they had no ambition to bear a part in a general pulling down of old institutions.

The phenomena of the Fenian movement did not fail to impress some statesmanlike minds in England. There were some public men who saw that the time had come when mere repression must no longer be relied upon as a cure for Irish discontent. We know since that time that even the worst excesses of the movement impressed the mind of Mr. Gladstone with a conviction that the hour was appropriate for doing something to remove the causes of the discontent that made Ireland restless. The impatient and silly nurse tries to stop the child's crying by beating it ; a more careful and intelligent person makes a prompt investigation, and finds that a pin is sticking into the little sufferer. The English Government had for a long time been the stupid nurse to the crying child. They had tried threatening words and quick blows. The cry of complaint still was heard. It occurred at last to some men of responsible authority to seek out the cause and quietly try to remove it. While many public instructors lost themselves in vain shriekings over the wickedness of Fenianism and the incurable perversity of the Irish people, one statesman was already convinced that the very shock of the Fenian agitation would arouse public attention to the recognition of substantial grievance, and to the admission that the business of statesmanship was to seek out the remedy and provide redress.

## CHAPTER LIV

## •TRADES-UNIONS

ENGLISH society was much distressed and disturbed about the same time by the stories of outrages more cruel, and of a conspiracy more odious and alarming in its purpose, than any that could be ascribed to the Fenian movement. It began to be common talk that among the trades-associations there was systematic terrorising of the worst kind, and that a *Vehmgericht* more secret and more grim than any known to the middle ages was issuing its sentences in many of our great industrial communities. Ordinary intimidation had long been regarded as one of the means by which some of the trades-unions kept their principles in force. Now, however, it was common report that secret assassination was in many cases the doom of those who brought on themselves the wrath of the Trades-unions. For many years the great town of Sheffield had had a special notoriety in consequence of the outrages of the kind that were believed to be committed there. When a workman had made himself obnoxious to the leaders of some local trades-union, it occasionally happened that some sudden and signal misfortune befell him. Perhaps his house was set on fire; perhaps a canister of gunpowder was exploded under his windows, or some rudely constructed infernal-machine was flung into his bedroom at midnight. The man himself, supposing him to have escaped with his life, felt convinced that in the attempt to destroy him he saw the hand of the union; his neighbours were of his opinion; but it sometimes happened, nevertheless, that there was no possibility of bringing home the charge upon evidence that could satisfy a criminal court. The comparative impunity which such crimes were enabled to secure made the perpetrators of them feel more and more safe in their enterprises; and the result was that outrages began to increase in atrocity, boldness, and numbers. The employers offered large rewards for the discovery of the offenders; the Government did the same; but not

much came of the offers. The employers charged the local trades-unions with being the authors of all the crimes; the officials of the unions distinctly and indignantly denied the charge. In some instances they did more. They offered on their own account a reward for the detection of the criminals, in order that their own innocence might thereby be established once for all in the face of day. At a public meeting held in Sheffield to express public opinion on the subject, the secretary of one of the local unions, a man named Broadhead, spoke out with indignant and vehement eloquence in denunciation of the crimes and in protest against the insinuation that they were sanctioned by the authority or done with the connivance of the trades-organisation. Most persons who read the report of the meeting were much impressed with the earnestness of Broadhead; and even among those who had no sympathy with the principles of unionism, there were not a few who were of opinion that Broadhead and his colleagues had been gravely wronged by the accusations made against them. On the other hand, it would seem that impartial persons who heard the speech made by Broadhead listened with a growing conviction that it was a little too virtuously indignant, and that it repudiated the idea of any appeal to force in maintaining the authority of the union somewhat more comprehensively than any recognition of known facts would warrant. At all events an appeal was made to the Government with apparently equal earnestness by the employers and by the union; and the Government resolved to undertake a full investigation into the whole condition of the trades-unions. A Commission was appointed, and a bill passed through Parliament enabling it to take evidence upon oath. The Commissioners sent down to Sheffield three examiners, the chief of whom was Mr. Overend, a Queen's Counsel of distinction, to make inquiry as to the outrages. The examiners had authority to offer protection to any one, even though himself engaged in the commission of the outrages, who should give information which might lead to the discovery of the conspiracy. This offer had its full effect. The Government were now so evidently deter-

mined to get at the root of all the evil, that many of those actively engaged in the commission of the crimes took fright and believed they had best consult for their personal safety. Accordingly, the Commission got as much evidence as could be desired, and it was soon put beyond dispute that more than one association had systematically employed the most atrocious means to punish offenders against their self-made laws and to deter men from venturing to act in opposition to them. The saw-grinders' union in Sheffield had been particularly active in such work, and the man named William Broadhead, who had so indignantly protested the innocence of his union, was the secretary of that organisation. Broadhead was proved to have ordered, arranged, and paid for the murder of at least one offender against his authority, and to have set on foot in the same way various deeds scarcely if at all less criminal. The crimes were paid for out of the funds of the union. There were gradations of outrage, ascending from what might be called mere personal annoyance up to the serious destruction of property, then to personal injury, to mutilation, and to death. "Rattening" was one of the milder forms of tyranny. The tools of obnoxious workers were destroyed; machinery was spoiled. Then the houses of the obnoxious were blown up, or cans of explosive material were flung into them at night. In one instance a woman was blinded; in another a woman was killed. Men were shot at with the object of so wounding them as to prevent them from carrying on their work; one man was shot at and killed. A ghastly account was given by one sufferer of the manner in which his house was set on fire at midnight by an explosive material flung in, and how the room and the bedcurtains flamed and blazed about him and his wife, and how he saved his wife with the utmost difficulty and at extreme risk to his own life, by tearing from her scorching body the nightdress already burning, and dropping her thus naked into the street. Broadhead himself came before the examiners and acknowledged the part he had taken in the direction of such crimes. He explained how he had devised them, organised them, selected the agents

by whom they were to be committed, and paid for them out of the funds of the union. The men whom he selected had sometimes no personal resentment against the victims they were bidden to mutilate or destroy. They were ordered and paid to punish men whom Broadhead considered to be offenders against the authority and the interests of the union, and they did the work obediently. In Manchester a state of things was found to exist only less hideous than that which prevailed in Sheffield. It was among the brickmakers of Manchester that the chief offences were committed. The clay which offending brickmakers were to use was sometimes stuffed with thousands of needles, in order to pierce and maim the hands of those who unsuspectingly went to work with it. The sheds of a master who dismissed union-men were burned with naphtha. An obnoxious man's horse was roasted to death. Many persons were shot at and wounded. Murder was done in Manchester too. Other towns were found to be not very far distant from Sheffield and Manchester in the audacity and ingenuity of their trade outrages. During the alarms caused by such revelations, many people began to cry out that the whole structure of our society was undermined, and that the "organisation of labour" was simply a vast conspiracy to make capital, science, and energy the mere bondslaves of the Trades-union and of the tyrants and serfs, knaves and dupes, who kept it up.

Society, however, does not long continue in a mood for the indulgence of mere alarm and inarticulate shrieking. Society soon began to reflect that if it had heard terrible things, it had probably heard all the worst. The great majority of the Trades-unions appeared after the most searching investigation to be absolutely free from any complicity in the crimes, or any sanction of them. Men of sense began to ask whether society had not itself to blame in some measure even for the crimes of the Trades-unions. The law had always dealt unfairly and harshly with the trade-associations. Public opinion had for a long time regarded them as absolutely lawless. There was a time when their very existence would have been an infraction of the law. For centuries our legislation had acted on

the principle that the working-man was a serf of society, bound to work for the sake of the employer and on the employer's terms. The famous statute of labourers, passed in the reign of Edward III., declared that every person under the age of sixty not having means to live should on being required be "bound to serve him that doth require him," or else be committed to gaol "until he find surety to serve." If a workman or a servant left his service before the time agreed upon, he was to be imprisoned. The same statute contained a section fixing the scale of wages, and declaring that no higher wages should be paid. An Act passed in the reign of Elizabeth contained provisions making the acceptance of wages compulsory, and fixing the hours and the wages of labour. A master wrongfully dismissing the servant was made liable to a fine, but a servant leaving his employment was to be imprisoned. The same principle continued to be embodied in our legislation with regard to masters and workmen, with hardly any modification, down to 1813, and indeed, to a great extent, down to 1824. Even after that time, and down to the period of which we are now writing, there was still a marked and severe distinction drawn between master and servant, master and workman, in our legislation. In cases of breach of contract the remedy against the employer was entirely civil; against the employed, criminal. A workman might even be arrested on a warrant for alleged breach of contract and taken to prison before the case had been tried. The laws were particularly stringent in their declarations against all manner of combination among workmen. Any combined effort to raise wages would have been treated as conspiracy of a specially odious and dangerous order. Down to 1825 a combination of workmen for their own protection was unlawful; but long after 1825 the law continued to deal very harshly with what was called conspiracy among working-men for trade purposes. The very laws which did this were a survival of the legislation which for centuries had compelled a man to work for whomsoever chose to call on him, and either fixed his maximum of wages for him or left it to be fixed by the justices. Not many years ago it was held that although a strike could not

itself be pronounced illegal, yet a combination of workmen to bring about a strike was a conspiracy, and was to be properly punished by law. In 1867, the very year when the Commission we have described held its inquiries at Sheffield and Manchester, a decision given by the Court of Queen's Bench affirmed that a friendly society, which was also a trades-union, had no right to the protection of the law in enforcing a claim for a debt. It was laid down that because the rules of the society appeared to be such as would operate in restraint of trade, therefore the society was not entitled to the protection of the civil law in any ordinary matter of account. The general objects of the Trades-union, as distinguished from those of the friendly society, were regarded as absolutely outside the pale of legal protection. It was not merely that the Trades-unions sometimes made illegal arrangements, which of course could not be recognised or enforced in any civil court. The principle was that because they, or some of them, did this sometimes, they and the whole of them, and all their transactions, were to be regarded as shut out from the protection of the civil law.

So rigidly was this principle applied to the Trades-unions that they were apparently not allowed to defend themselves against plunder by a dishonest member. This extraordinary principle was in force for several years after the time at which we have now arrived in this history. For example, in 1869 an information was laid in Bradford against the secretary of a trades-association for having wilfully misappropriated a sum of money belonging to the society. The guilt of the man was clear, but the magistrates dismissed the charge, on the ground that the society was itself established for illegal purposes, that is, for the restraint of trade, and that therefore it was not entitled to the protection of the law. An appeal was made to the Court of Queen's Bench, and the decision was that the appeal must be dismissed, and that the society was established for illegal purposes. The judges were divided equally in opinion, and therefore, in accordance with the usage, the judgment was allowed to go in favour of the decision of the inferior court. The absurdity of such a principle

of law is evident. It is proper that an illegal association should not be maintained in illegal acts ; but it is hardly a principle of our law that because an association has been established for purposes which seem in opposition to some legal principle, its members may be plundered by any one with impunity. A man who keeps a gambling-house is the proprietor of an unlawful establishment ; but if a robber snatches his purse he is free to claim the protection of the police, and it is not open to the thief to rest his defence simply on the plea that the man's occupation is illegal, and that his money, if left to him, would unquestionably have been applied to unlawful purposes. That illustration is, however, inadequate to express properly the injustice done to the Trades-unions. It assumes that the objects of the unions were fairly to be considered unlawful, and to be classed with the business of gaming-houses and shops for the reception of stolen goods. But in truth the main object of the Trades-unions was as strictly in accordance with public policy as that of the Inns of Court or the College of Surgeons. One result of the investigations into the outrages in Sheffield and in Manchester was that public attention was drawn directly to the whole subject ; the searching light of full free discussion was turned on to it, and after a while every one began to see that the wanton injustice of the law and of society in dealing with the associations of working-men was responsible for many of the errors and even of the crimes into which some of the worst of these associations had allowed themselves to be seduced. It is as certain as any problem in mathematics can be, that when the civil law excludes any class of persons from its full protection, that class will be easily drawn into lawlessness. "The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law," is a reminder that bars the advice which bids the unfriended to be not poor but break the law which denies them its protection.

It was not, however, the law alone which had set itself for centuries against the working-man. Public opinion and legislation were in complete agreement as to the rights of Trades-unions. For many years the whole body of English public opinion outside the working-class itself was entirely against the principle of the unions. It is, perhaps, not



possible to recall to mind any question open to controversy in which public opinion was ever in our time so nearly unanimous as it was on the subject of trades-organisations. It was an axiom among all the employing and capitalist classes that trades-organisations were as much to be condemned in point of morality as they were absurd in the sight of political economy. Country squires, who had only just been converted from the public profession of protectionist principles, and who still in their secret intelligences failed to see that they were wrong ; the whole tone of whose thinking was still, when left to itself, entirely protectionist, and who, the moment they ceased to keep a strict guard on their tongues, would talk protection as naturally as they talked English—such men were lost in wonder or consumed by anger at the working-man's infatuated notions on the subject of political economy. All the leading newspapers were constantly writing against the Trades-unions at one time ; not writing merely as a Liberal paper writes against some Tory measure, but as men condemn a monstrous heresy. A comfortable social theory began to spring up, that all the respectable and well-conducted workmen were opposed to the unions, and all the ne'er-do-wells were on their side and in their ranks. The paid officers of the union were described as mere cunning parasites, living on the sap and strength of the organisation. The spokesmen of the unions were set down invariably as selfish and audacious demagogues, who incited their ignorant victims on to ruin in order that they themselves might live in comfort and revel in popular applause.

There can be no doubt that some insincere and unprincipled persons did occasionally attach themselves to the trades-organisations. Such men professed to adopt a principle in order to get money and applause. They did exactly as men do in a higher social class who profess to adopt a principle in order to get into Parliament, and then into office. But on the whole the leaders of the trades-organisations appear to have been men of sincere purpose and of good character. The officers of many of the societies worked for very small pay ; for no more, in fact, than they could have got by their ordinary labour. It is also, we believe, a fact

that, taken on the whole, the men in the organisations represented a much better class of workmen than those who held aloof from them. The numbers of men registered on the books of the trades-unions did not by any means represent the actual number who sympathised with unionism. Much of the business of a trades-union was simply that of an ordinary benefit society. Strikes were not always going on; the funds of the union were not always being voted to assist some mutinous brothers. By far the greater part of the occupation of a trades-union was like that of the Oddfellows or some other benefit association. A great many working-men, a considerable proportion indeed of the working population, were members of some friendly society, and had been so perhaps from their first starting into life. Such men did not always care to give up the society to which they had been long attached, for the purpose of joining a trades-union which was usually only performing just the same functions. Therefore one mistake very commonly made by those who entered into the controversy was to count the mere numbers on the books of the trades-unions, and assume that these represented the whole strength of the movement. The numbers would have been great, and ought to have been significant, in any case; but great as they were they by no means fairly illustrated the strength of the hold which the principle of the trades-organisation had got upon the working-classes.

That sort of public opinion of which we have already spoken, well satisfied in its mind as to most things, was for many years particularly well satisfied about strikes. We can find its views expressed in every tone. Solemn disquisition and light comedy alike gave them form. Parliament, the pulpit, the press, the stage, philosophy, fiction, all were for a long time in combination to give forth one pronouncement on the subject. A strike was something always wicked and foolish; abstractly wicked; foolish to the fundamental depths of its theory. "All I have to say," a benevolent nobleman called out to a meeting of working-men, "is—never strike!" That was his sincere advice: whatever happens, never strike; if you strike you must be doing wrong. To engage in a strike was, according to his

view, like engaging in a conspiracy to murder. Such was long the opinion of almost all above the social level of the workman himself. A strike was in their view an offence against all social laws, to be reprobated by every good man. It was not looked upon as a rough last resource to get at a decision in a controversy not otherwise to be settled, but simply as a crime. It was assumed as an axiom in political economy that a strike must be a wrong thing, because it wasted time and money, and could not in any way increase the wages fund of the country. The "wages fund" was flung at the head of the erring artisan as a phrase to settle the whole question for him, and show him what a foolish man he was not to take any terms offered him. Undoubtedly a strike is under any circumstances the cause of the throwing away of time and money. But so too is a lawsuit. There can be no civil cause in which it would not have saved time and money if the parties could have come to a reasonable agreement among themselves, and avoided any appeal to the court. Prudent men do very often put up with a considerable loss rather than waste their time, spend their money, and sour their temper in a court of law. But it would be in vain to tell the meekest or the dullest man that he has no right to appeal to a civil court to enforce any claim. This was, however, practically the sermon which English public opinion kept preaching to the working-man for generations. He had often no way of asserting his claims effectively except by the instrumentality of a strike. A court of law could do nothing for him. If he thought his wages ought to be raised, or ought not to be lowered, a court of law could not assist him. Once it would have compelled him to take what was offered, and work for it or go to prison. Now, in better times, it would offer him no protection against the most arbitrary conduct on the part of an employer. He was admonished that he must not attempt by any combination to "fix the price of labour." Yet he knew very well that in many trades the masters did by association among themselves fix the price of labour. He knew that there were associations of employers which held meetings at regular periods for the purpose of agreeing among themselves as to the wages they

would pay to their workmen. He failed to see why he and his fellows should not come to a common resolution as to the wages they would accept. The argument drawn from the "wages fund" did not affect him greatly. He reasoned the matter out in a rough and ready way of his own. He saw that the employer was making a great deal of money in the year, and that he and his fellows had very small wages. It seemed to him that the master ought to be content with a smaller amount of profit, and give his workmen a larger weekly rate of pay. That may not have been very sound political economy; but even as a thesis of political economy it was not to be got rid of by the familiar way of putting the argument about the wages fund. As regarded the right of combination, he saw that other men in other occupations did combine and did have rules of their own, and in fact trades-unions of their own. What, he asked, is the Bar but a trades-union? Is not a man prohibited from competing with his fellows by taking a rate of pay lower than the minimum fixed by the association? Is he not refused permission to practise at all if he will not conform to the rules of the lawyers' union? What is the medical profession but a trades-union? • What the Stock Exchange?

In spite of law, in spite of public opinion, the trades-unions went on and prospered. Some of them grew to be great organisations, disposing of vast funds. Several fought out against employers long battles that were almost like a social civil war. Sometimes they were defeated; sometimes they were victorious; sometimes they got at least so far that each side could claim the victory, and wrangle once more historically over the point. Many individual societies were badly managed and went to pieces. Some were made the victims of swindlers, just like other institutions among other classes. Some were brought into difficulties simply because of the childlike ignorance of the most elementary principles of political economy with which they were conducted. Still the Trades-union, taken as a whole, became stronger and stronger every day. It became part of the social life of the working-classes. At last it began to find public opinion giving way before it. Some eminent men, of

whom Mr. Mill was the greatest, had long been endeavouring to get the world to recognise the fact that a strike is not a thing which can be called good or bad until we know its object and its history; that the men who strike may be sometimes right, and that they have sometimes been successful. But as usual in this country, and as another evidence doubtless of what is commonly called the practical character of Englishmen, the right of the trades-unions to existence and to social recognition was chiefly impressed upon the public mind by the strength of the organisation itself. The processions of the trades-unions during the Reform agitation had startled many alarmists and set many indolent minds thinking. This vast organisation had apparently sprung out of the ground. Every influence, legal, social, and political, had been against it. The press had condemned it; the pulpit had denounced it; Parliament had passed no end of laws against it; good men mourned over it; wise men shook their heads at it; and yet there it was, stronger than ever. Many men came at once to the frankly admitted conclusion that there must be some principles, economic as well as others, to justify the existence and the growth of so remarkable an institution. The Sheffield outrages, even while they horrified every one, yet made most persons begin to feel that the time had come when there must not be left in the mouth of the worst and most worthless member of a trades-union any excuse for saying any longer that the law was unjust to him and to his class. A course of legislation was then begun which was not made complete for several years after. We may anticipate here the measures which passed in 1875, and show how at length the fair claims of the unions were recognised. The masters and workmen were placed on absolute equality as regarded the matter of contract. They had been thus equal for many years in other countries; in France, Germany, and Italy, for example. A breach of contract resulting in damages was to be treated on either side as giving rise to a civil and not a criminal remedy. There was to be no imprisonment, except as it is ordered in other cases, by a county court judge; that is, a man may

be committed to prison who has been ordered to pay a certain sum, and out of contumacy will not pay it, although payment is shown to be within his power. No combination of persons is to be deemed criminal if the act proposed to be done would not be criminal when done by one person. Several breaches of contract were, however, very properly made the subject of special legislation. If, for example, a man "wilfully and maliciously" broke his contract of service to a gas or water company, knowing that by doing so he might cause great public injury, he might be imprisoned. This is perfectly reasonable. A man employed to watch a line of railway who wilfully broke his contract of service and ran away at a time when his sudden absence might cause the destruction of a coming train, would hardly be punished adequately by a civil process and an order to pay a fine. On the other hand, it should be said that the person hiring should be imprisoned for breach of contract as well as the person hired, if his breach of contract involved serious injury, or even serious danger, to life or property. Imprisonment too might be inflicted on any person who used either violence or intimidation to compel others to act with him. It was made strictly unlawful and punishable by imprisonment to hide or injure the tools of workmen in order to prevent them from doing their work; or to "beset" workmen in order to prevent them from getting to their place of business, or to intimidate them into keeping away from it. In principle this legislation accomplished all that any reasonable advocate of the claims of the trades-unions could have demanded. It put the masters and the workmen on an equality. It recognised the right of combination for every purpose which is not itself actually contrary to law. It settled the fact that the right of a combination is just the same as the right of an individual. The law had long conceded to any one man the right to say for himself that he would not work for less than a certain rate of wages. It now acknowledged that a hundred or ten thousand working-men have a right to combine in the same resolution. It admitted their legal right to put this resolve into execution by way

of a strike if they so think fit. The law has nothing to do with the wisdom or the folly of the act. It may be very unwise; it may be ridiculous; that is a matter for the decision of the persons concerned in it. A man may be a great fool who goes to law for some unreasonable claim, or to resist some well-sustained demand; but the law-courts are open to him all the same—if he throws away his money, that is his affair. Then, to carry the exposition a little further, an association of working-men have a perfect legal right to endeavour to persuade other working-men to adopt their views, accept their resolutions, and become members of their union. They have a right to say that any one who does not agree to their rules shall not become or shall not remain a member of their society. Further, and finally, they have a right to say that they will not work in the same establishment with men who have acted in such a way as in their opinion to do injury to the common cause of the trade. This may seem to assert a very injurious principle; yet its justice is hardly to be disputed. Its justice never would have been disputed if the upper classes in this country, and all who follow their lead, had not got into the habit of regarding trade questions from the employers' point of view. No one would have questioned the right of an employer to dismiss a number of workmen because they belonged to a society of communists. Many persons would think him very harsh and unreasonable; but many also would hold that he was doing perfectly right; and no one would say that he was acting in excess of his strict rights as an employer. His argument would be: "Communism is a principle directly opposed to the interests of property; I as a man of property cannot have men in my employ who are engaged in a purpose which I believe destructive to the interests of my class." This is exactly what the trades-unions said of men who went in opposition to the union. They said: "These men are acting in a manner highly injurious to the interests of our class; we will not work with them." Their case is even better than that of the employer. The employer says: "I have a right to turn these men out of my place; they shall not work for me." The union

men only said: "We will not work with men who set themselves in opposition to the interests of the union." Every one knows that there are eccentric employers here and there who make rules of various odd kinds with regard to the conditions on which they will accept the services of persons willing to work. One will not employ a Catholic; another will not employ a Unitarian; a third proscribes any young man who smokes. We have heard of a great establishment the proprietor of which would not employ, or continue to employ, any man who wore a moustache. The members of the trades-unions were of course fully aware of the existence of such arbitrary conditions imposed by employers. It naturally seemed intolerable to them to find that they were preached at in most of the newspapers, and condemned from all platforms except their own, because they asserted an independence of action for themselves in matters of far greater importance to the interests of their union and their class.

So far as this we believe their rights are now fully admitted. Beyond this no sensible man among the trades-unions themselves would think of asking that they should go. The unions have no right to coerce or intimidate any one into agreement with them. To refuse to associate with a man is a very different thing from claiming a right to molest or frighten him. The more fully the rights of the trades-unions are acknowledged, the more energetic and fearless the law may be in preventing them from going beyond those rights. We say fearless, because law, or those who administer it, can always and only be fearless when the authority exerted is based on fairness and sound principle. The men who worked most earnestly to organise and maintain the trades-unions never could have had any wish that the organisation should act in violation of the principles of justice, civilisation, and public policy. Perhaps if the just claims and the substantial rights of the union had been recognised long before, the world might never have been shocked by the hideous revelations of crime and outrage in Sheffield and in Manchester. No influence is more demoralising to the character of men than to feel that the laws of a country deal unjustly with them; that



the laws are made by and for a class whose sympathies are not with them ; and that from the protection of those laws they are blindly or purposely excluded.

The civil laws which dealt so harshly for a long time with Trades-unionism dealt unfairly too with the friendly societies, with that strong and sudden growth of our modern days — Co-operation. We call it a growth of our modern days because, although there has been a principle of co-operation in some form or other working in a more or less experimental and darkened way all through the history of civilisation, yet the shape it has assumed of recent days is strictly a growth of modern conditions. If working-men can combine effectively and in large numbers for a benefit society or for a strike, why should they not also co-operate for the purpose of supplying each other with good and cheap food and clothing, and dividing among themselves the profits which would otherwise be distributed among various manufacturers and shopkeepers ? This is a question which had often been put before, without any very decided practical result coming of it ; but in 1844, or thereabouts, it was put and tested in a highly practical manner by some working-men in the north of England. North and south of England seem to be marked out by the same differences as those which distinguish north and south in most other places : the north has more of the vigorous and practical intelligence, the south more of the poetic and artistic feeling. From the sturdy north of England have always come the great political and industrial movements which specially contributed to make England what we now know her to be. In the north the co-operative movement first sprang into existence. The association called "The Equitable Pioneers' Co-operative Store" was founded in Rochdale by a few poor flannel-weavers. The times were bad ; there had been a failure of a savings-bank, involving heavy loss to many classes ; and these men cast about in their minds for some way of making their little earnings go far. Most of them were, or rather had been, followers of Robert Owen, who, if he thought wrongly on many subjects, taught them at least to think. These Rochdale weavers were thoughtful

men, probably of the class who might have figured in the pages of "Alton Locke." One decidedly good teaching which they had from Robert Owen was a dislike to the credit system. They saw that the shopkeeper who gave his goods at long credit must necessarily have to charge a much higher price than the actual value of the goods, and even of a reasonable profit, in order to make up for his having to lie out of his money, and to secure himself against bad debts. They also saw that the credit system leads to almost incessant litigation; and besides that litigation means the waste of time and money, some of them, it appears, had a conscientious objection to the taking of an oath. It occurred to these Rochdale weavers, therefore, that if they could get together a little capital they might start a shop or store of their own, and thus be able to supply themselves with better goods, and at cheaper rates, than by dealing with the ordinary tradesmen. Twenty-eight of them began by subscribing twopence a week each. The number of subscribers was afterwards increased to forty, and the weekly subscription to threepence. When they had got £28 they thought they had capital enough to begin their enterprise with. They took a small shop in a little back street, called Toad Lane. The name might seem a repulsive one, and perhaps ill-omened, unless indeed its omen were to be held encouraging, on the theory of the toad bearing the precious jewel in his head. But it has to be said that "Toad Lane" was only the Lancashire corruption of "The Old Lane"; "The Old" soon changing itself into the "T' Owd," in a manner familiar to all who know Lancashire, and "T' Owd" become "Toad" by easy and rapid transmutation. After the shop had been fitted up, the equitable pioneers had only £14 left to stock it; and the concern looked so small and shabby that the hearts of some of the pioneers might have well-nigh sunk within them. A neighbouring shopkeeper, feeling utter contempt for the whole enterprise, declared that he could remove the whole stock-in-trade in a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow-load of goods soon, however, became too heavy to be carried away in the hold of a great steamer. The pioneers began by supplying each other with groceries;

they went on to butchers' meat, and then to all sorts of clothing. From supplying goods they progressed on to the manufacturing of goods; they had a corn mill and a cotton mill, they became to a certain extent a land and building society. They set aside part of their profits for a library and reading-room, and they founded a co-operative Turkish bath. Their capital of £28 swelled in sixteen years to over £120,000. Cash payments and the division of profits were the main sources of this remarkable prosperity. Much of their success in the beginning was due to the fact that they supplied good articles, and that those who bought could always rely on carrying home real value for their money. But the magic of the principle of division of profits worked wonders for them. Not merely did the shareholders share in the profits, but all the buyers received an equitable percentage on the price of every article they bought. Each purchaser, on paying for what he had bought, received a ticket which entitled him to that percentage at each division of profit, and thus many a poor man found at the quarterly division that he had several shillings, perhaps a pound, coming to him, which seemed at first to have dropped out of the clouds, so little direct claim did he appear to have on it. He had not paid more for his goods than he would have had to pay at the cheapest shop; he had got them of the best quality the price could buy; and at the end of each period he found that he had a sum of money standing to his credit, which he could either take away or leave to accumulate at the store. Many other institutions were soon following the example of the Rochdale pioneers. Long before their capital had swelled to the amount we have mentioned, the North of England was studded with co-operative associations of one kind or another. One of the very earliest founded was the Leeds Corn Mill. There were working-men's associations as well as co-operative stores. In the working associations the workers are the capitalists. They receive the regular rate of wages, and they also receive a dividend on their profits. We need not enter into further detail as to the progress of these institutions. Many of them proved sad failures. Some started on chimerical principles; some

were stupidly, some selfishly mismanaged. There came seasons of heavy strain on labour and trade, when the resources of many were taxed to their uttermost, and when some even of the best seemed for a moment likely to go under. The co-operative associations suffered in fact the trials and vicissitudes that must be met by all institutions of men. But the one result is clear and palpable; they have as a whole been a most remarkable success. Of late years the principle has been taken up by classes who would have appeared at one time to have little in common with the poor flannel-weavers of Rochdale. The civil servants of the Crown first adopted the idea; and now in some of the most fashionable quarters of London the carriages of some of their most fashionable residents are seen at the crowded doors of the co-operative store. However the co-operative principle may develop, it may safely be predicted that posterity will not let it die. It has taken firm hold of our modern society. No one now any longer dreams, as some of its more enthusiastic founders once did, that it is destined to prove a regenerator of mankind; that it is to extinguish competition, and the selfishness which keeps competition up. It is in its present stage nothing but competition in a new form. The co-operative store competes with the ordinary tradesman, who winces very keenly at the competition, and calls for even the intervention of Parliament to save him from at least one class of the competitors. But even very sanguine reformers do not often now ask that their one idea shall supersede every other; and most of the promoters of the co-operative system are well satisfied that it takes so conspicuous a place among established institutions. It seems certainly destined to develop rather than fade; to absorb rather than be absorbed. The law was much against the principle in the beginning. Before 1852 all co-operative associations had to come under the Friendly Societies' Act, which prohibited their dealing with any but their own members. An Act obtained in 1852 allowed them to sell to persons not members of their body. For many years they were not permitted to hold more than an acre of land. More lately this absurd restriction was abolished, and they were allowed to trade in

land, to hold land to any extent, and to act as building societies. The friendly societies, which were in their origin merely working-men's clubs, have been the subject of legislation since the later years of the last century. It may be doubted whether, even up to this day, that legislation has not done them more harm than good. The law neither takes them fairly under its protection and control, nor leaves them to do the best they can for themselves uncontrolled and on their own responsibility. At one time the sort of left-handed recognition which the law gave them had a direct tendency to do harm. An officer was appointed by the Government, who might inspect the manner in which the accounts of the societies were kept, and certify that they were in conformity with the law; but he had no authority to look actually into the affairs of a society. His business was in fact nothing more than to certify that the legal conditions had been fully complied with, thus implying that on the face of things the accounts seemed all right. The mere fact, however, that there was any manner of Government certificate proved sadly misleading to thousands of persons. Some actually regarded the certificate as a guarantee given by the Government that their money was safe; a guarantee which bound the State to make good any loss to the depositors. Others, who were not quite so credulous, were convinced at least that the certificate testified on Government authority that the funds of the society were safe, and that its accounts and its business were managed on principles of strict economical soundness. The Government official certified nothing of the kind. A man at the head of a large establishment brings to some accountant the books of his household expenses. The accountant examines them and says, "All these figures add up quite correctly; the accounts seem to be kept on the proper principle. If all these goods were got which I see put down here, and if all these payments were made, then your accounts are in safe condition." But the accountant does not know whether the cook and the butler and the grooms got all the articles put down in the books, or whether the articles were all required, or whether they were paid for as stated. For all the accountant

knows or professes to know, the owner of the house may be swindled by every servant and every tradesman. His affairs may be managed for him on some such principle as that of the house in which Gil Blas was once a servant, and where, from the steward down, the whole body of domestics and of trades people were in a conspiracy to cheat the unhappy proprietor. The certificate given to the friendly societies was of no greater value than this. Many of the societies were sadly mismanaged; in certain of them there was the grossest malversation of funds; in some towns much distress was caused among the depositors in consequence. The societies had to pass, in fact, through a stage of confusion, ignorance, and experiment, and it is perhaps only to be wondered at that there was not greater mismanagement, greater blundering, and more lamentable failure. It is not by any means certain that during these earlier stages of the growth of such institutions, the interference and even the protection of Government would have done them much good. But the indirect control which the Government for a long time undertook, had apparently no other effect than to interpose restriction just where restriction was injurious, and to give a semblance of protection which was only calculated to create a false security in the minds of ignorant people and to lead to delusion and disappointment.

The Government cannot be charged of late years with any want of active interest in the business of life among the poor. Its protecting, directing hand is almost everywhere. Sometimes the help thus given is judicious and valuable. For example, the Post Office Savings Banks have become most popular institutions, and no one can doubt that they have tended to develop habits of prudence and economy among the poorer classes all over the country. One of the most curious phenomena of these later times is the reaction that has apparently taken place towards that system of paternal government which Macaulay detested, and which not long ago the Manchester School seemed in good hopes of being able to supersede by the virtue of individual action, private enterprise, voluntary benevolence. We shall still have to describe some much more remarkable

illustrations of this reaction than any that have yet been given. Keeping for the present to trades-organisations, we would direct attention to the fact that whereas in old days the Government said, "You shall do nothing to help yourselves without our control; and we will do nothing for you but to prosecute you as often as possible," the tendency now is to say, "You may do everything you like for yourselves, but you must allow us to enter into a benevolent rivalry with you and insist upon doing all we can for you in our way at the same time." Whatever the defects or the possible dangers of such a principle, if pushed too far, it is at least not likely to engender artisan conspiracy, to give excuse for secret association, to help men like Broadhead into the position of leaders and despots, to furnish weak minds with an excuse for following the instigations of the fire-raiser and the assassin. All that law has done lately to remove restriction from the "organisation of labour," if we may once more employ that pompous but expressive phrase, has been well done. We must not hasten to anticipate ill from the almost equally rapid movement of the tendency to help labour in doing labour's own proper work.

## CHAPTER LV

### THE EXAMPLE OF THE NEW DOMINION

ON February 19, 1867, Lord Carnarvon, Secretary for the Colonies, moved the second reading of the Bill for the Confederation of the North American Provinces of the British Empire. This was in fact a measure to carry out in practical form the great principles which Lord Durham had laid down in his celebrated report. Lord Durham had done more than merely affirm the principles on which the Constitution of the Canadas should be established. He had laid the foundations of the structure. Now the time had come to raise the building to its practical completion. The bill prepared by Lord Carnarvon proposed that the

provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in other words Upper and Lower Canada, along with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, should be joined in one federation, to be called the Dominion of Canada, having a central or federal Parliament, and local or state Legislatures. The central Parliament was to consist of a Senate and a House of Commons. The Senate was to be made up of seventy members nominated by the Governor-General for life, on a summons from under the Great Seal of Canada. The House of Commons was to be filled by members elected by the people of the provinces according to population, at the rate of one member for every 17,000 persons, and the duration of a Parliament was not to be more than five years. The executive was vested in the Crown, represented of course by the Governor-General. The principle on which the central Parliament was constructed appears to have been arrived at by adopting some of the ideas of England and some of those of the United States. The Senate, for example, was made to resemble as nearly as possible the system of the English House of Lords; but the representative plan applied to the House of Commons was precisely the same as that adopted in the United States. It seems almost superfluous to observe that the whole idea on which the Dominion system rests is that of the American federation. The central Parliament manages the common affairs; each province has its own local laws and legislature. There is the greatest possible variety and diversity in the local systems of the different provinces of the Dominion. The members are elected to the House of Commons on the most diverse principles of suffrage. In some of the provinces the vote is open; in others it is given by ballot, in secret.

The Act of Confederation recites that the Constitution of the Dominion shall be similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom. But in truth the only similarity consists in the fact that one of the two chambers is nominated by the Crown, and that the authority of the Crown is represented in the Dominion by the presence of a Governor-General. In all other respects the example of the American Republic has been followed. The keystone of the whole



system is that principle of federation which the United States have so long represented, and which consists of local self-government for each member of the Confederacy and the authority of a common Parliament for strictly national affairs. This fact is not an objection to the scheme. It is, on the contrary, the best security for its success. It would have been impossible to establish in Canada anything really resembling the Constitution of England. Uniformity of legislation would have been unendurable. Nothing could make the Senate of Canada an institution like the English House of Lords. Nomination by the Crown could not do it. There was some wisdom in the objection raised by Mr. Bright to this part of the scheme. A good deal of sentimentalism was talked in Parliament by the ministers in charge of the Confederation scheme about the filial affection of Canada for the mother country, and the intense anxiety of the Canadians to make their Constitution as like as possible to that of England. The Canadians appear to have very properly thought of their own interests first of all, and they adopted the system which they believed would best suit the conditions under which they lived. In doing so they did much to strengthen and to commend that federative principle on which their Dominion is founded, and which appears likely enough to contain the ultimate solution of the whole problem of government as applied to a system made up of various populations with diverse nationalities, religions, and habits. So far as one may judge of the tendencies of modern times, it would seem that the inclination is to the formation of great State systems. The days of small independent States seem to be over. If this be so, it may safely be asserted that great State systems cannot be held together by uniform principles of legislation. The choice would clearly seem to be between small independent States and the principle of federation adopted in the formation of the Dominion of Canada.

The Dominion scheme only provided at first for the Confederation of the two Canadian provinces with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Provision was made for the admission of any other province of British North America

which should desire to follow suit. The newly constructed province of Manitoba, made up out of what had been the Hudson's Bay territories, was the first to come in. It was admitted into the union in 1870. British Columbia and Vancouver's Island<sup>a</sup> followed in 1871, and Prince Edward's Island claimed admission in 1873. The Dominion now embraces the whole of the regions constituting British North America, with the exception of Newfoundland, which still prefers its lonely system of quasi-independence. It may be assumed that this curious isolation will not last long; and the Act constituting the Dominion opens the door for the entrance of this latest lingerer outside whenever she may think fit to claim admission.

The idea of a federation of the provinces of British North America was not new in 1867, or even in the days of Lord Durham. When the delegates of the revolted American colonies were discussing among themselves their terms of federation, they agreed in their articles of union, that Canada "acceding to the Confederation and joining in the measures of the United States, shall be admitted into and entitled to the advantages of the union." No answer to this appeal was made by either of the Canadas, but the idea of union among the British provinces among themselves evidently took root then. As early as 1810 a colonist put forward a somewhat elaborate scheme for the union of the provinces. In 1814 Chief Justice Sewell, of Quebec, submitted a plan of union to the Duke of Kent. In 1827 resolutions were introduced into the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, having relation principally to a combination of the two Canadas, but also suggesting something "more politic, wise, and generally advantageous; viz. an union of the whole four provinces of North America under a viceroyalty, with a facsimile of that great and glorious fabric, the best monument of human wisdom, the British Constitution." Nothing further, however, was done to advance the principle of federation until after the rebellion in Canada, and the brief dictatorship of Lord Durham. Then, as we have already said, the foundation of the system was laid. In 1849 an association, called the North American League, was formed, which held a meeting in

Toronto to promote Confederation. In 1854 the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia discussed and adopted resolutions recommending the closer connection of the British provinces; and in 1857 the same province urged the question upon the consideration of Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton, and then Colonial Secretary. Mr. Labouchere seems to have thought that the Imperial Government had better not meddle or make in the matter, but leave it altogether for the spontaneous action of the colonists. In the following year the coalition Ministry of Canada, during the Governor-Generalship of Sir Francis Head, made a move by entering into communications with the Imperial Government and with the other American provinces. The other provinces hung back, and nothing came of this effort. Then Nova Scotia tried to get up a scheme of union between herself, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island. Canada offered to enter into the scheme; and in 1864 Mr. Cardwell, then Colonial Secretary, gave it his approval. New conferences were held in Quebec; but the plan was not successful. New Brunswick seems to have held back this time. It was clear that the provinces were steadily moving toward an agreement, and that a basis of federation would be found before long. The maritime provinces always felt some difficulty in seeing their way to union with the Canadas. Their outlying position and their distance from the proposed seat of central government made one obvious reason for hesitation. Even at the time when the bill for the Confederation was introduced into the House of Lords, Nova Scotia was still holding back. That difficulty was got over, and the Act was passed in March 1867. Lord Monck was made the first Governor-General of the new Dominion, and its first Parliament met at Ottawa in November of the same year.

In 1869—we are now somewhat anticipating—the Dominion was enlarged by the acquisition of the famous Hudson's Bay territory. When the Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company expired in 1869, Lord Granville, then Colonial Secretary, proposed that the chief part of the Company's territories should be transferred to the Dominion for £300,000; and the proposition was agreed to on both

sides. The Hudson's Bay Charter dated from the reign of Charles II. The region to which it referred carries some of its history imprinted in its names. Prince Rupert was at the head of the association incorporated by the Charter into the Hudson's Bay Company. The name of Rupert's Land perpetuates his memory as that of Prince Edward's Island will remind posterity of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria. The Hudson's Bay Company obtained from King Charles, by virtue of the Charter in 1670, the sole and absolute government of the vast watershed of Hudson's Bay, the Rupert's Land of the Charter, on condition of paying yearly to the King and his successors "two elks and two black beavers," "whensoever and so often as we, our heirs and successors, shall happen to enter into the said countries, territories, and regions." The Hudson's Bay Company was opposed by the North West Fur Company in 1783, which fought them for a long time with Indians and law, with the tomahawk of the red man and the legal judgment of a Romilly or a Keating. In 1812 Lord Selkirk founded the Red River Company. This interloper on the battle-field was harassed by the North West Company, and it was not until 1821, when the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies—impoverished by their long warfare—amalgamated their interests, that the Red River settlers were able to reap their harvests in peace, disturbed only by occasional plagues of locusts and blackbirds. In 1835, on Lord Selkirk's death, the Hudson's Bay Company bought the settlement from his executors. It had been under their sway before that, having been committed to their care by Lord Selkirk during his lifetime. The privilege of exclusive trading east of the Rocky Mountains was conferred by Royal license for twenty-one years in May 1838, and some ten years later the Company received a grant of Vancouver's Island for the term of ten years from 1849 to 1859. The Hudson's Bay Company were always careful to foster the idea that their territory was chiefly wilderness, and discountenanced the reports of its fertility and fitness for colonisation which were from time to time brought to the ears of the English Government. In 1857, at the instance of

Mr. Labouchere, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of the British possessions under the Company's administration. Various Government expeditions, and the publication of many Blue Books, enlightened the public mind as to the real nature of those tracts of land which the council from the Fenchurch Street house declared to be so desolate. A curious illustration of the policy adopted by the Hudson's Bay Company is to be found in the contrast between the glowing descriptions of the lands under their sway given by Sir George Simpson, who was forty years Governor of the Hudson's Bay territories, in his "Overland Journey Round the World," and his evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons. The Company exerted itself strenuously to defend its interests. The influence of Mr. Edward Ellice, who was at once a director of the Company, a member of the Committee, and a witness, did much to guide the Committee's decision. An amendment of Mr. Gladstone to their unsatisfactory report, urging that all lands capable of colonisation be withdrawn from the Company, and only land incapable of being so treated left to them, was negatived by the casting vote of the chairman. During the sittings of the Committee there was cited in evidence a petition from 575 Red River settlers to the Legislative Assembly of Canada demanding British protection. This appeal was a proceeding curiously at variance with the later action of the settlement. When in 1869 the chief part of the territories was transferred to Canada, on the proposition of Earl Granville, the Red River country rose in rebellion, and refused to receive the new Governor. Louis Riel, the insurgent chief, seized on Fort Garry and the Company's treasury, and proclaimed the independence of the settlement. Sir Garnet, then Colonel, Wolseley, was sent in command of an expedition which reached Fort Garry on August 23, when the insurgents submitted without resistance, and the district received the name of Manitoba.

Thus the Dominion of Canada now stretches from ocean to ocean. The population of British North America did not exceed one million and a half in 1841, at the time of

the granting of the Constitution, and it is now over four millions. The revenue of the provinces has multiplied more than twentyfold during the same time. Canada has everything that ought to make a commonwealth great and prosperous. The fisheries of her maritime provinces, the coal and iron of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the grain-producing regions of the North-West, the superb St. Lawrence, hardly rivalled on the globe as a channel of commerce from the interior of a country to the ocean—all these are guarantees of a great future. Not unnaturally many in and out of Canada speculate as to the form that future will show. Canada sprang into prosperity when she was allowed to do the work of her political development for herself; the question is, will she never demand a more absolute self-government? Will she be captivated by the charms of a distinct national existence? For some years a feeling was spreading in England which began to find expression in repeated and very distinct suggestions that the Canadians had better begin to think of looking out for themselves. Many Englishmen complained of this country being expected to undertake the principal cost of the defences of Canada, and to guarantee her railway schemes, especially when the commercial policy which Canada adopted towards England was one of a strictly protective character. Shall we have to fight the battles of Canada, it was asked; shall we have to become responsible for her railway enterprises; and is Canada not even to give us an open market for our manufactures? On the other hand, some Canadians might well have asked whether Canada was to be always left open as a possible battle-ground on which England's quarrels were to be fought out. If the *Alabama* dispute had led to war, the United States would have invaded Canada. The colonists, who had had nothing to do with the cause of quarrel, would have seen their homesteads exposed to all the dangers and the terrors of invasion. It was natural that such considerations should have their influence on both sides. But, as often happens in our political life, the advocates of the policy which would urge the colonists into independence went just so far as to bring about a reaction. Then for a while nothing was heard

here but the protestations of statesmen that the connection with the Canadas and with all the colonies was the one thing for which they lived. This outcry bore down all others for a time, and the hints as to independence were heard no more. The movement that way had evidently been premature. Indeed, it not only came prematurely, but it came from the wrong side. It ought not to be part of the policy of the mother country to prompt and goad the colonies into independence. If the demand is ever made it ought to be the spontaneous suggestion of the colonies themselves. The question will be settled by the interests of Canada itself when the time for decision comes. Mere protestations of kinship and loyalty and so forth will not count for much in the final settlement. A Canadian official, Mr. J. G. Bourinot, of Ottawa, has argued with much force that there are three destinies open to Canada, one of which she will have some time or other to choose. These are, annexation to the United States, complete independence, and what he calls "consolidation into the empire." For the present at least there cannot be said to be anywhere in Canada a party in favour of annexation to the United States. Such a change is undoubtedly one of the possibilities; and we agree with Mr. Bourinot in thinking it more than probable that the connection with England should always endure on its present conditions. But the question of annexation, which once was a practical and positive reality in Canadian politics, has been losing its vitality steadily ever since the mission of Lord Durham; and just now can hardly be called a living question at all. Independence is sure to become some time or other a demand among Canadians. It is hardly possible to believe that the Dominion should long go on without seeing the rise of a political party whose watchword will be a cry for complete national independence. The Dominion has already a practical independence. Except for the fact that she receives the Governor-General whom the Sovereign sends out, Canada is as completely mistress of her own destinies as though she were an independent republic. She frames her own tariffs to suit her own interests, and she may even, if she pleases, as Mr. Bourinot says, fix the

expenses of her militia and her defences solely with regard to Canadian inclinations. Every year, every event, only makes it more clear that she is virtually independent.

The Letellier controversy, to go forward a few years, is an illustration of this fact. In March 1878, M. Luc Letellier, the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, quarrelled with his Cabinet, and dismissed the Premier, M. C. B. de Boucherville, and his ministry, alleging, as justification for his act, that the Government was in the habit of passing various measures without his knowledge, and of generally neglecting to consult with him. He then placed M. Joly in office, though M. Joly's ministry were unable to command a majority in the House. A petition was thereupon addressed to the Governor in Council, praying for M. Letellier's dismissal. Lord Lorne's ministers advised him to accede to the petition. Lord Lorne objected, on the ground that though a Governor-General appointed a Lieutenant-Governor on the advice of his ministers, the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor was a matter for his own personal decision. This point of view seemed to be authorised by the words of the Dominion Act; but an appeal from Lord Lorne to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Colonial Secretary, received a reply counselling the Governor-General to give way to his ministers. Thus the Imperial Government withdrew from the representative of the Crown all but the merest semblance of authority, and made him—what indeed he should be, but certainly was not intended to be at the time when the confederation was formed—the figure-head of the Dominion, the mouth-piece for the utterances of the Canadian legislature. Acting upon the advice of the Colonial Secretary, Lord Lorne gave way, M. Luc Letellier was removed, and with him went the last pretension of England to rule her North American colonies.

Still, there is a vast difference between the charm of a complete and that of a merely virtual independence. The time might come when Canada would feel ambitious of a career and a history all her own. In a merely practical point of view she might object to the dangerous fellowship of a country which is liable to be engaged in wars with



states whose fleets might harass Canadian seaports; or whose armies, in at least one case, might cross the Canadian frontier line. The very reasonable policy which might induce England some time to say that the Canadians must defend themselves, might well seem to the Canadians to be appropriately followed up by a declaration on the part of the Dominion, that if she must defend herself, she must be free from responsibility for the foreign policy of England. Independence, therefore, is a possibility of the future, although it has not yet come to be a question in practical politics. But then there is the third possibility to which Mr. Bourinot refers—that of “consolidation into the empire.” Canada might become one member of a great English federation, and in that way have a voice in directing the foreign policy of England, while admitting English opinion to a voice in the construction of Canadian tariffs. This question concerns the destinies of most other colonies of Great Britain; of all her colonies in time. What is to come of Australia? That colony has no United States near at hand to suggest a possibility of annexation; and her choice is apparently limited to the alternative independence or “consolidation into the empire.” Independence is surely in this case a natural and a possible solution. Australia is well suited by her geographical position and the circumstances of her political growth to form, if it were necessary, a confederation of her own. Australia now consists of five separate colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland; all these are provinces of one vast island, the largest island in the world. We leave New Zealand and even Tasmania out of consideration for the moment. Tasmania, and even New Zealand, might naturally enough form part of an Australian confederation, and should of necessity form part of such a confederation were it Australasian. For the present, however, we prefer to speak of the colonies which are bound together within the shore-lines of the one great island. All these colonies have now representative government, with responsible ministries, and parliamentary chambers. New South Wales is the oldest of the group. Its political life may be said to date from 1853, when it

first received what is fairly to be called a constitution. For ten years previously it had possessed a sort of legislature, consisting of a single chamber, of which half the members were nominee, and the other half elected. One of the most distinguished members of that Chamber for many years was Mr. Lowe, who appears to have learned to hate democratic government from watching over its earliest infancy, as some women imbibe a dislike to all children from having had to do too much nursery-work in their girlhood. Victoria, which was separated from New South Wales in 1851, got her liberal constitution in 1856. The other colonies followed by degrees. The constitutional systems differ among themselves as to certain of their details. The electoral qualification, for example, differs considerably. Generally speaking, however, they may be set down as all alike illustrating the principles and exercising the influence of representative government. They are training-schools for the work of complete independence, if ever it should suit the interests of the Colonies to start absolutely for themselves. They have not got on so far without much confusion and many sad mistakes. The constitutional controversies and difficulties in Victoria and in other Australian colonies are a favourite example with some writers and speakers, to show the failure of the democratic principle in government. But it is always forgotten that the principle of representative government in a colony like Victoria is, as a matter of necessity, that of democracy. Even those who believe the aristocratic influence invaluable in the life of a nation must see that New South Wales and Victoria and Queensland must somehow contrive to do without such an influence. An aristocracy cannot be imported; nor can it be sown in the evening to grow up next morning. The colonists are compelled to construct a system without it. There are many difficulties in their way. It is often carelessly said that they ought to find the work easy enough, because they have the example and the experience of England to guide them. But they have no such guide. The conditions under which the colonies have to create a constitutional system are entirely different from those of England; so different, indeed, that there must be a

certain danger of going astray simply from trying to follow England's example under circumstances entirely unlike those of England.

Despite all confusion or blundering, however, it is clear that the Australian colonies are growing and prospering, and that their gradual training in the business of political government will soon bring each of them to the principles and the mechanism best suited for its condition and its development. All the lessons lately taught by the Home Government have been, and very properly, that they must manage their affairs and compose their domestic quarrels without the intervention of Imperial authority. This has been impressed upon them just as earnestly by Conservative as by Liberal Secretaries of State. The Victorian deadlock, as it was called, is a recent example. It began with a dispute between the two Chambers as to the payment of members. The majority in the Legislative Assembly, or House of Commons, passed as usual the estimate for the payment of members, the system of paying the members having prevailed since 1872. It was thrown out by the Legislative Council, or Senate. The Chief Secretary—or, as we should call him, the Prime Minister—of the Colony, Mr. Graham Berry, added the amount to the Appropriation Bill. The Legislative Council refused to pass the Bill. The ministry retorted by dismissing or threatening to dismiss a whole army of Government officials—county court judges, magistrates, coroners, and other functionaries—on the ground that they had not the money to pay their salaries. Constitutional government seemed for the moment to have really come to a deadlock. Both Chambers eagerly appealed to the Governor. The Governor, acting on the advice of the Colonial Office, preserved a strict neutrality. The money question was temporarily settled by a sort of compromise; but the popular Assembly at once set to work, with the assistance of the Colonial Ministry, to diminish the power of the Upper Chamber. They adopted a measure for that purpose; but the question was how to get the Upper Chamber to pass it. Mr. Berry came to England to endeavour to prevail upon the Government here to effect a change in the

Victorian constitution by an Imperial decree. The Conservative Secretary of State, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, firmly refused to interfere. Only in the very last extremity, it was authoritatively declared, could the mother country interfere in the domestic disputes of a colony having parliamentary institutions and a responsible ministry. This was an important declaration, and it announced a just and wise resolve. The training given by self-government would be of little value or substance indeed if the mother country were to undertake to intervene whenever anything went wrong, and on her own authority try to set it right. The Australian colonies have therefore, like the Dominion of Canada, a virtual independence. They have the right of complete self-government. Only the name of a distinct nationality is wanting. As in the case of the Dominion of Canada, so too in that of Australia, it is quite possible that the colonists may some time feel inspired by the longing for a national independence. In such a condition of things the geographical situation of Australia would make the experiment seem even more natural than that of Canada. Australia, girt by her oceans, and with the Tasmanian and New Zealand islands for associates, would form a natural federation apart; a federation quite capable of living for itself, and of having in the future a distinct nationality, and perhaps a great history.

But Australia, or Australasia, would also be well fitted to take her part in that wider and grander federation which is already the dream and the faith of many colonists and some Englishmen. This is the third choice which Mr. Bourinot contemplates as offered to the colonies and to England. Why, it is asked, should there not be a great Confederation of England, of Ireland, and of the states that are now colonies? Why should there not be an Imperial Parliament, then truly Imperial, in which each of these separate provinces or states should be represented for common purposes, while each had separately its local legislature to arrange its own domestic affairs? Why should Canada, should Victoria, should Cape Colony, or Natal, or New Zealand, be left absolutely without a voice in the decision of those important questions of foreign

policy, of peace and war, which may have such momentous results for any one of those provinces? A war with the United States would undoubtedly bring on an invasion of Canada. The Crimean war seemed at one time destined to invite a Russian raid upon some of the Australian colonies. Why should colonies like these be allowed no share in deciding the policy which may possibly come to its most momentous issue on their own soil? If the colonies are never to have that voice in Imperial affairs, is it likely that they will long continue merely to hang on to the skirts of England? Then, again, one great difficulty between England and her colonies is caused by the different views which they take on questions of tariff and taxation. Canada, for example, enforces against Great Britain the severest protective system. English politicians and manufacturers chafe so much at this that it seems likely to be the cause at one time or other of a quarrel which no fine phrases on either side can conjure away. An English statesman of the present day has said that as we lost some of our American colonies because we insisted upon taxing them, we may lose the others because we will not permit them to tax us.<sup>2</sup> Might not this difficulty, too, be removed from the path of the future if colonists and inhabitants of the mother country alike sat in the one Imperial legislature, and discussed in common their great common interests? Is not some such principle, indeed, the probable solution of the problem of government for systems made up of various and widely separated provinces and nationalities? Here, too, would be a framework always wide enough for the reception of new creations. The process which in the American Republic converts first a desert into a territory, and then a territory into a state, would admit new province after new province into this great federated system. Who shall say that even the future relations of the peoples of Hindostan might not be satisfactorily provided for by such a principle of federation? Immense, no doubt, are the difficulties that lie in the way of such a scheme. To many minds it will seem that only the merest dreamers could entertain the idea. But the so-called dreamers would, perhaps, have something

to say for the practicable nature of their plan. They might at least retort upon their critics by asking, "What then have you, who call yourselves practical men and despise the dreamers of dreams—what have you to suggest? Do you really believe that things can always go on as they are going now? You have eyes; open them and look beyond your own parish, your own club, coterie, or village, and say whether you think it possible that great colonies like those of British North America and those of Australasia are likely to remain always content with their present anomalous condition, or that your own people would remain for ever content with it even if the colonists were never to complain? What then do you expect? Annexation to America in the one case; independence in the other, or perhaps independence in both, and in all? To that result, if it must come to that, the mind of England would have to reconcile itself. She has no Imperial privilege to interfere with the destinies of the world. But in the meantime would it not be the part of you, the practical men, to consider whether that other suggestion is not more desirable as well as more easy to realise; that scheme of a great federation which should reconcile the several interests and the individual energies of the colonies with the central policy of a great free empire?"

## CHAPTER LVI

"BEGINS WITH SOLDAN, ENDS WITH PRESTER  
JOHN"

IN the summer of 1867 England received with strange welcome a strange visitor. "*Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?*" Looking forward into the future we may indeed apply yet other words of Dido, and say of the new comer to these shores, "*Quibus ille jactatus fatis!*" It was the Sultan of Turkey who came to visit England—the Sultan Abdul-Aziz, whose career was to end

ten years after in dethronement and suicide. Abdul-Aziz was the first Sultan who ever set his foot on English soil. He was welcomed with a show of enthusiasm which made cool observers wonder and shrug their shoulders. The Cretan insurrection was going on, and the Sultan's generals were doing cruel work among the unfortunate rebels of that Greek race with which the people of England had so long and so loudly professed the deepest sympathy. Yet the Sultan was received by Englishmen with what must have seemed to him a genuine outburst of national enthusiasm. As a matter of course he received the usual Court entertainments ; but he was also entertained gorgeously by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London ; he went in state to the Opera and the Crystal Palace ; he saw a review of the fleet, in company with the Queen, at Spithead ; he was run after and shouted for by vast crowds wherever he showed his dark and melancholy face, on which even then the sullen shadow of the future might seem to have been cast. His presence threw completely into the background that of his nominal vassal the Viceroy of Egypt, who might otherwise have been a very sufficient lion in himself. Abdul-Aziz doubtless believed in the genuineness of the reception, and thought it denoted a real and lasting sympathy with him and his State. He did not know how easily crowds are gathered and the fire of popular enthusiasm is lighted in London. The Shah of Persia was to experience the same sort of reception not long after ; Garibaldi had enjoyed it not long before ; Kossuth had had it in his time. Some of the newspapers politely professed to believe that the visit would be productive of wonderful results to Turkey. The Sultan, it was suggested, would surely return to Constantinople with his head full of new ideas gathered up in the West. He would go back much impressed by the evidences of the blessings of our constitutional government, and the progressive nature of our civic institutions. He would read a lesson in the glass and iron of the Crystal Palace, the solid splendours of the Guildhall. He would learn something from the directors of the railway companies, and something from the Lord Mayor. The Cattle Show at the Agricultural Hall could

not be lost on his observant eyes. The result would be a new era for Turkey—another new era: the real new era this time. The poor Sultan's head must have been sadly bemused by all the various sights he was forced to see. He left England just before the public had had time to get tired of him; and the new era did not appear to be any nearer for Turkey after his return home.

Mr. Disraeli astonished and amused the public towards the close of 1867 by a declaration he made at a dinner which was given in his honour at Edinburgh. The company were surprised to learn that he had for many years been a thorough reformer and an advocate of popular suffrage, and that he had only kept his convictions to himself because it was necessary to instil them gently into the minds of his political colleagues. "I had," he said, "to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure. I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and the country on this question of Reform." All the time, therefore, that Mr. Disraeli was fighting against Reform Bills, he was really trying to lead his party "with a gentle hand, thither, oh, thither," towards the principles of popular reform. This then, people said, is what Vivian Grey meant when he declared that for statesmen who would rule, "our wisdom must be concealed under folly, and our constancy under caprice." Some members of the party which Mr. Disraeli professed to have thus cleverly educated, were a little scandalised and even shocked at the frank composure of his confession; some were offended; it seemed to them that their ingenious instructor had made fools of them. But the general public, as usual, persisted in refusing to take Mr. Disraeli seriously, or to fasten on him any moral responsibility for anything he might say or do. It might have been wrong in another statesman to put on for years the profession of Conservatism in order that he might get more deeply into the confidence of Conservatives and instil into them the principles of Mr. Bright. But in Mr. Disraeli it was of no consequence; that was his way; if he were



anything but that he would not be Mr. Disraeli; he would not be leader of the House of Commons; he would not be Prime Minister of England.

For to that it soon came; came at last. "At this moment how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end?" What Vivian Grey once wanted to attain that end he had long since compassed. Only the opportunity was lately needed to make him Prime Minister; and that opportunity came early in 1868. Lord Derby's health had for some time been so weakly that he was anxious to get rid of the trouble of office as soon as possible. In February 1868 he became so ill that his condition excited the gravest anxiety. He rallied indeed and grew much better; but he took the warning and determined on retiring from office. He tendered his resignation, and it was accepted by the Queen. It fell to the lot of his son, Lord Stanley, to make the announcement in the House of Commons. There was a general regret felt for the retirement of Lord Derby from a leading place in politics; but as soon as it appeared that his physical condition was not actually hopeless, men's minds turned at once from him to his successor. No one could now doubt that Mr. Disraeli's time had come. The patient career, the thirty years' war against difficulties, were to have the long-desired reward. The Queen sent for Mr. Disraeli, and invited him to assume Lord Derby's vacated place and to form a Government. By a curious coincidence the autograph letter containing this invitation was brought from Osborne to the new Prime Minister by General Grey, the man who defeated Mr. Disraeli in his first endeavour to enter the House of Commons. That was the contest for Wycombe in June 1832. It was a memorable contest in many ways. It was the last election under the political conditions which the Reform Bill brought to a close. The Reform Bill had only just been passed when the Wycombe election took place, and had not come into actual operation. The state of the poll is amusing to read of now. Thirty-five voters all told registered their suffrages. Twenty-three voted for Colonel Grey, as he then was; twelve were induced to

support Mr. Disraeli. Then Mr. Disraeli retired from the contest, and Colonel Grey was proclaimed the representative of Wycombe by a majority of eleven. Nor had Wycombe exhausted in the contest all its electoral strength. There were, it seemed, two voters more in the borough who would have polled, if it were necessary, on the side of Colonel Grey. Mr. Disraeli's successful rival in that first struggle for a seat in Parliament was now the bearer of the Queen's invitation to Mr. Disraeli to become Prime Minister of England. The public in general were well pleased that Mr. Disraeli should reach the object of his ambition. It seemed only the fit return for his long and hard struggle against so many adverse conditions. He had battled with his evil stars; and his triumph over them pleased most of those who had observed the contest. Mr. Frank H. Hill, in that remarkable book, unrivalled in its way, which bears the modest name of "Political Portraits," speaks of Mr. Disraeli's curiously isolated position in the House of Commons. "He sits like a solitary gladiator waiting the signal for combat." The sentence is admirable as a description. Nothing could be happier as a comparison. For the very reason that Mr. Disraeli had always been like the solitary gladiator the public were all the more pleased when his long, lonely struggle "for his own hand" carried off the prize at last. The public never looked on Mr. Disraeli, up to this period of his career at least, as anything but a brilliant gladiator. The author of "Political Portraits" observes, that "Mr. Disraeli's Premiership is remarkable chiefly for the fact that he was Prime Minister." This too was true. It is a correct description of that short season of rule which came to Mr. Disraeli on the retirement of Lord Derby. But if Mr. Hill were to take up the subject now, he would probably admit that Mr. Disraeli's second Premiership was remarkable for a good many other things besides the fact that he was a second time Prime Minister.

The new Premier made few changes in his Cabinet. His former Lieutenant, Lord Cairns, had been for some time one of the Lords Justices of the Court of Chancery. Mr. Disraeli made him Lord Chancellor. In order to do

this he had to undertake the somewhat ungracious task of informing Lord Chelmsford, who sat on the woolsack during Lord Derby's tenure of office, that his services would no longer be required. Lord Chelmsford's friends were very angry, and a painful controversy began in the newspapers. It was plainly stated by some of the aggrieved that Lord Chelmsford had been put aside because he had shown himself too firmly independent in his selection of judges. But there seems no reason to ascribe Mr. Disraeli's action to any other than its obvious and reasonable motive. His Ministry was singularly weak in debating talent in the House of Lords. Lord Cairns was one of the best parliamentary debaters of the day; Lord Chelmsford was hardly entitled to be called a parliamentary debater at all. Lord Cairns was a really great lawyer; Lord Chelmsford was only a lawyer of respectable capacity. Lord Chelmsford was at that time nearly seventy-five years old, and Lord Cairns was a quarter of a century younger. It is surely not necessary to search for ungenerous or improper motives to explain the act of the new Prime Minister in preferring the one man to the other. Mr. Disraeli merely did his duty. Nothing could justify a Minister who had the opportunity and the responsibility of such a choice in deciding to retain Lord Chelmsford rather than to bring in Lord Cairns.

No other change was important. Mr. Ward Hunt, a respectable country gentleman of no great position and of moderate abilities, became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the room of Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Walpole, who had been in the Cabinet for some time without office, retired from the Administration altogether. A good deal of work was got through in the session. A bill was introduced to put a stop to the system of public executions, and passed with little difficulty. The only objection raised was urged by those who thought the time had come for abolishing the system of capital punishment altogether. Public executions had long grown to be a scandal to the country. Every voice had been crying out against them. The author of the "Ingoldsby Legends" had made a public execution the subject of a bitter and painful satire. Dickens had

denounced the system with generous vehemence ; Thackeray had borne stern testimony to its abominations. A public execution in London was a scene to fill an observer with something like a loathing for the whole human race. Through all the long night before the execution the precincts of the prison became a bivouac ground for the ruffianism of the metropolis. The roughs, the harlots, the professional robbers, and the prospective murderers held high festival there. The air reeked with the smell of strong drink, with filthy jokes and oaths and blasphemy. The soul took its flight as if it were a trapeze-performer in a circus. The moral effect of the scene, as an example to evil-doers, was about as great as the moral effect of a cock-fight. The demoralising effect, however, was broad and deep. It may be doubted whether one in ten thousand of those who for mere curiosity came to see an execution did not go away a worse creature than he had come. As the old-fashioned intramural burial-ground made by its own vapours new corpses to fill it, so the atmosphere of the public execution generated fresh criminals to exhibit on the scaffold. Posterity will probably wonder how the age which would have scouted the idea of any wholesome effect being wrought by public floggings, could have remained so long under the belief that any manner of good could be done by the system of public executions. Since the change made in 1868, the execution takes place within the precincts of the gaol ; it is witnessed by a few selected persons, usually including representatives of the press, and it is certified by the verdict of a coroner's jury.

Another change of ancient system was made by the measure which took away from the House of Commons the power of deciding election petitions. The long-established custom was, that an election petition was referred to a Committee of the House of Commons, who heard the evidence on both sides, and then decided by majority of votes as to the right of the person elected to hold the seat. The system was open to some obvious objections. The one great and crying evil of our electioneering was then the bribery and corruption which attended it. A Parliamentary Committee could hardly

be expected to deal very stringently with bribery, seeing that most of the members of the Committee were sure to have carried on or authorised bribery on their own account. A false public conscience had grown up with regard to bribery. Few men held it really in hatred. The country gentleman whose own vote, when once he had been elected, was unpurchasable by any money bribe, thought it quite a natural and legitimate thing that he should buy his seat by corrupting voters. As in a former age no gentleman thought it wrong to seduce a woman, so in a very recent day no man with money thought it improper to spend some of his money in corrupting electors. What censure was it likely a country squire would have got fifty years ago if accused before a council of squires of having seduced some tenant's wife or daughter? Just so much would a rich man have got twenty years ago from a Parliamentary Committee if it were proved that he had allowed his agent to lay out money ingeniously for him in bribes. Then again, the decision of the Parliamentary Committee was very often determined by the political opinions of the majority of its members. Acute persons used to say, that when once the Committee had been formed they could tell what its decision would be. "Show me the men and I'll show you the decision," was the principle. It was not always found to be so in practice. A Committee with a Conservative majority did sometimes decide against a Conservative candidate. A Committee with a majority of Whigs has been known to unseat a Whig occupant. But in general the decision of the Committee was either influenced by the political opinions of its majority, or, what was nearly as bad so far as public influence was concerned, it was believed to be so influenced. There had therefore been for a long time an opinion growing up that something must be done to bring about a reform, and in 1867 a Parliamentary Select Committee reported in favour of abandoning altogether the system of referring election petitions to a tribunal composed of members of the House of Commons. The proposal of this Committee was, that every petition should be referred to one of the Judges of the superior courts at Westminster, with power to decide both law and fact, and to report not

only as to the seat but as to the extent of bribery and corruption in the constituency. The Judges themselves strongly objected to having such duties imposed upon them. The Lord Chief Justice stated on their behalf that he had consulted with them, and was charged by them one and all to convey to the Lord Chancellor "their strong and unanimous feeling of insuperable objection to undertaking functions the effect of which would be to lower and degrade the judicial office, and to destroy, or at all events materially impair, the confidence of the public in the thorough impartiality and inflexible integrity of the Judges, when in the course of their ordinary duties political matters come incidentally before them." Notwithstanding the objections of the Judges, however, the Government, after having made one or two unsuccessful experiments at a measure to institute a new court for the trial of election petitions, brought in a bill to refer such petitions to a single Judge, selected from a list to be made by arrangement among the Judges of the three superior courts. This bill, which was to be in operation for three years as an experiment, was carried without much difficulty. It has been renewed since that time, and slightly altered. The principle of referring election petitions to the decision of a legal tribunal remains in force, and it is very unlikely indeed that the House of Commons will ever recover its ancient privilege. Many members of that House still regret the change. They say, and not unreasonably, that with time and the purifying effect of public opinion the objections to the old system would have died away. A Committee of the House of Commons would have come to regard bribery as all honest and decent men must in time regard it. They would acknowledge it a crime and brand it accordingly. So too it is surely probable that members of the House of Commons sitting to hear an election petition would have got over that low condition of political morals which allowed them to give or be suspected of giving their decision for partisan purposes without regard to facts and to justice. On the other hand, it seems a strange anomaly that a Judge may not only declare the candidate of the majority disentitled to a seat, but declare the candidate

of the minority entitled to it. In one celebrated case of an Irish election the candidate elected by an overwhelming majority was unseated by the decision of the Judge; the candidate who had a very small minority of votes in his favour was installed in the seat. It was obviously absurd to call such a man the representative of the constituency. It is right to say that none of the effects anticipated by the Chief Justice were felt in England. The impartiality of the Judges was never called in question. In Ireland it was otherwise, at least in some instances. Judges are rarely appointed in Ireland who have not held law office; and law office is usually obtained by parliamentary, in other words, by partisan service. There is not therefore always the same confidence in the impartiality of the Judges in Ireland that prevails in England, and it must be owned that in one or two instances at least, the effect of referring an election petition to the decision of an Irish Judge was not by any means favourable to the public faith either in the dignity, or the impartiality of the Bench. Of late years some really stringent measures have been taken against bribery. Several boroughs have been disfranchised altogether because of the gross and seemingly ineradicable corruption that prevailed there. Time, education, and public opinion will probably before long cleanse our political system of the stain of bribery. Before long surely it will be accounted as base to give as to take a bribe.

The House of Lords too abandoned about this time one of their ancient usages; the custom of voting by proxy. A Select Committee of the Peers had recommended that the practice should be discontinued. It was defended of course, as every antiquated and anomalous practice is sure to be defended. It was urged, for example, that no men can be better qualified to understand the great political questions of the day than members of the House of Peers who are employed in the diplomatic service abroad, and that it is unfair to exclude these men from affirming their opinion by a vote, even though they cannot quit their posts and return home to give the vote in person. This small grievance, if it were one, was very properly held to be of little account when compared with the obvious objections

to the practice. The House of Lords, however, were not willing absolutely and for ever to give up the privilege. They only passed a standing order "that the practice of calling for proxies on a division be discontinued, and that two days' notice be given of any motion for the suspension of the order." It is not likely that any attempt will be made to suspend the order and renew the obsolete practice.

The Government ventured this year on the bold but judicious step of acquiring possession of all the lines of telegraph, and making the control of communication by wire a part of the business of the Post Office. They did not succeed in making a very good bargain of it, and for a time the new management resulted in the most distracting confusion. But the country highly approved of the purchase. The Post Office has long been one of the best managed departments of the Civil Service.

An important event in the year's history was the successful conclusion of the expedition into Abyssinia. We have already mentioned that much alarm had long been felt in the country with regard to the fate of a number of British subjects, men and women, who were held in captivity by Theodore King of Abyssinia. A vague mysterious interest hung around Abyssinia. It is a land which claims to have held the primitive Christians, and to have the bones of St. Mark among its treasury of sacred relics. It held fast to the Christian faith, according to its own views of that faith, when Egypt flung it aside after the Arab invasion. The Abyssinians trace the origin of their empire back to the time of Solomon when the Queen of Sheba visited him. The Emperor or King of Abyssinia was the Prester John, the mysterious king-priest of the middle ages. If Sir John Mandeville may be accepted as any authority, that traveller avers that the title of Prester John rose from the fact that one of the early kings of Abyssinia went with a Christian knight into a Christian church in Egypt and was so charmed with the service that he vowed he would thenceforth take the title of priest. He further declared, that "he wolde have the name of the first preest that wente out of the Chirche ; and his name was John." A traveller



whom not a few were disposed to class with Sir John Mandeville, brought back to Europe in a later day some marvellous tales of the Abyssinians. An advertisement prefixed to the third volume of Buffon's "History of Birds," acknowledges "the free and generous communication which I had of the drawings and observations of Mr. James Bruce who, returning from Numidia and the interior parts of Abyssinia, stayed in my house for several days, and made me a partaker of the knowledge which he had acquired in a tour no less fatiguing than hazardous." The publication of Bruce's "Travels in Abyssinia" excited an interest which was further inflamed by the fierce controversy as to the accuracy of his statements and descriptions. Some at least of Bruce's most disputed assertions have been confirmed since his day by the observations of other travellers. The curiosity as to the land of Prester John was revived for modern times by Bruce and the controversy Bruce called up; and in addition to the public anxiety on account of the English prisoners, there was in England a certain vague expectation of marvellous results to come of a military expedition into the land of ancient mystery. Among the captives in Theodore's hands were Captain Cameron, her Majesty's Consul at Massowah, with his secretary and some servants; Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, a Syrian Christian and naturalised subject of the Queen; Lieutenant Prideaux, and Dr. Blanc. These men were made prisoners while actually engaged on official business of the English Government, and the expedition was therefore formally charged to recover them. But there were several other captives as well, whom the Commander-in-Chief was enjoined to take under his protection. There were German missionaries and their wives and children, some of the women being English; some teachers, artists, and workmen, all European. The quarrel which led to the imprisonment of these people was of old standing. Some of the missionaries had been four years in duress before the expedition was sent out to their rescue. In April 1865, Lord Chelmsford had called the attention of the House of Lords to the treatment which certain British subjects were then receiving at the hands of

Theodore, the Negus or supreme ruler of Abyssinia. Theodore was a usurper. Few Eastern sovereigns who have in any way made their mark on history, from Haroun-al-Raschid and Saladin downwards, can be described by any other name than that of usurper. Theodore seems to have been a man of strong barbaric nature, a compound of savage virtue and more than savage ambition and cruelty. He was a sort of wild and barbarous Philip of Macedon. He was open to passionate and lasting friendships ; his nature was swept by stormy gusts of anger and hatred. His moods of fury and of mildness came and went like the thunderstorms and calms of a tropic region. He had had a devoted friendship for Mr. Plowden, a former English Consul at Massowah, who had actually lent Theodore his help in putting down a rebellion, and was killed by the rebels in consequence. When Theodore had crushed the rebellion, he slaughtered more than a hundred of the rebel prisoners as a sacrifice to the manes of his English Patroclus. Captain Cameron was sent to succeed Mr. Plowden. It should be stated that neither Mr. Plowden nor Captain Cameron was appointed Consul for any part of Abyssinia. Massowah is an island off the African shore of the Red Sea. It is in Turkish ownership and forms no part of Abyssinia, although it is the principal starting point to the interior of that country from Egypt, and the great outlet for Abyssinian trade. Consuls were sent to Massowah, according to the terms of Mr. Plowden's appointment in 1848, "for the protection of British trade with Abyssinia and the countries adjacent thereto." Mr. Plowden, however, had made himself an active ally of King Theodore, a course of proceeding which naturally gave great dissatisfaction to the English Government. Captain Cameron, therefore, received positive instructions to take no part in the quarrels of Theodore and his subjects, and was reminded by Lord John Russell that he held "no representative character in Abyssinia." It probably seemed to Theodore that the attitude of England was altered and unfriendly, and thus the dispute began which led to the seizure of the missionaries. Captain Cameron seems to have been much wanting in discretion,

and Theodore suspected him of intriguing with Egypt. Theodore wrote a letter to Queen Victoria requesting help against the Turks, and for some reason the letter remained unanswered. A story went that Theodore cherished a strong ambition to become the husband of the Queen of England, and even represented that his descent from the Queen of Sheba made him not unworthy of such an alliance. Whether he ever put his proposals into formal shape or not, it is certain that misunderstandings arose; that Theodore fancied himself slighted; and that he wreaked his wrongs by seizing all the British subjects within his reach, and throwing them into captivity. They were put in chains and kept in Magdala, his rock-based capital. Consul Cameron was among the number. He had imprudently gone back into Abyssinia from Massowah, and was at once pounced upon by the furious descendant of Prester John.

The English Government had a difficult task before them. It seemed not unlikely that the first movement made by an invading expedition might be the signal for the massacre of the prisoners. The effect of conciliation was therefore tried in the first instance. Mr. Rassam, who held the office of Assistant British Resident at Aden, a man who had acquired some distinction under Mr. Layard in exploring the remains of Nineveh and Babylon, was sent on a mission to Theodore with a message from Queen Victoria. Lieutenant Prideaux and Dr. Blanc were appointed to accompany him. Theodore played with Mr. Rassam for a while, and then added him and his companions to the number of the captives. Theodore seems to have become more and more possessed with the idea that the English Government were slighting him; and one or two unlucky mishaps or misconceptions gave him some excuse for cherishing the suspicion in his jealous and angry mind. At last an ultimatum was sent by Lord Stanley, demanding the release of the captives within three months on penalty of war. This letter does not seem to have ever reached the King's hands. The Government made preparations for war, and appointed Sir Robert Napier, now Lord Napier of Magdala, then Commander-in-

Chief of the army of Bombay, to conduct the expedition. A winter sitting of Parliament was held in November 1867, supplies were voted, and the expeditionary force set out from Bombay. •

The expedition was well managed. Its work was, if we may use a somewhat homely expression, done to time. The military difficulties were not great ; but the march had to be made across some four hundred miles of a mountainous and roadless country. The army had to make its way, now under burning sun, and now amid storms of rain and sleet, through broken and perplexing mountain gorges and over mountain heights ten thousand feet above the sea level. Anything like a skilful resistance, even such resistance as savages might well have been expected to make, would have placed the lives of all the force in the utmost danger. The mere work of carrying the supplies safely along through such a country was of itself enough to keep the energies of the invading army on the utmost strain. Meanwhile the captives were dragging out life in the very bitterness of death. The King still oscillated between caprices of kindness and impulses of cruelty. He sometimes strolled in upon the prisoners in careless undress ; perhaps in European shirt and trousers, without a coat ; and he cheerily brought with him a bottle of wine, which he insisted on the captives sharing with him. At other times he visited them in the mood of one who loved to feast his eyes on the anticipatory terrors of the victims he has determined to destroy. He had still great faith in the fighting power of his Abyssinians. Sometimes he was in high spirits, and declared that he longed for an encounter with the invaders. At other moments, however, and when the steady certain march of the English soldiers was bringing them nearer and nearer, he seems to have lost heart and become impressed with a boding conviction that nothing would ever go well with him again. One description given of him as he looked into the gathering clouds of an evening sky and drew melancholy auguries of his own fate, makes him appear like a barbaric Antony watching the rack dislimn and likening its dispersion to his own vanishing fortunes. Sir Robert Napier arrived in front of

Magdala in the beginning of April 1868. One battle was fought on the tenth of the month. Perhaps it ought not to be called a battle. It is better to say that the Abyssinians made such an attack on the English troops as a bull sometimes make on a railway train in full motion. The Abyssinians attacked with wild courage and spirit. The English weapons and the English discipline simply swept the assailants away. Others came on; wild charges were made again and again; five hundred Abyssinians were killed, and three times as many wounded. Not one of the English force was killed, and only nineteen men were wounded.

Then Theodore tried to come to terms. He sent back all the prisoners, who at last found themselves safe and free under the protection of the English flag. But Theodore would not surrender. Sir Robert Napier had therefore no alternative but to order an assault on his stronghold. Magdala was perched upon cliffs so high and steep, that it was said a cat could not climb them except at two points—one north and one south—at each of which a narrow path led up to a strong gateway. The attack was made by the northern path, and despite all the difficulties of the ascent, the attacking party reached the gate, forced it, and captured Magdala. Those who first entered found Theodore's dead body inside the gate. Defeated and despairing he had died in the high Roman fashion: by his own hand.

The rock-fortress of King Theodore was destroyed by the conqueror. Sir Robert Napier was unwilling to leave the place in its strength, because he had little doubt that if he did so it would be seized upon by a fierce Mahomedan tribe, the bitter enemies of the Abyssinian Christians. He therefore dismantled and destroyed the place. "Nothing," to use his own language, "but blackened rock remains" of what was Magdala. The expedition returned to the coast almost immediately. In less than a week after the capture of Magdala it was on its march to the sea. On June 21, the troop-ship *Crocodile* arrived at Plymouth with the first detachment of troops from Abyssinia. Nothing could have been more effectively planned, conducted, and timed than the whole expedition. It went and came to the precise

moment appointed for every movement, like an express train. That was its great merit. Warlike difficulties it had none to encounter. No one can doubt that such difficulties too, had they presented themselves, would have been encountered with success. The struggle was against two tough enemies, climate and mountain; and Sir Robert Napier won. He was made Baron Napier of Magdala, and received a pension. The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to the army of Abyssinia and its commander. It was on this occasion that Mr. Disraeli delivered that astonishing burst of eloquence which for the hour turned the attention of the country away from Lord Napier's triumph, and almost succeeded in making the capture of Magdala seem ridiculous. Lord Napier, Mr. Disraeli declared, had led the elephants of India bearing the artillery of Europe through African passes which might have startled the trapper of Canada and appalled the hunter of the Alps; and he wound up by proclaiming, that "the standard of St. George was hoisted upon the mountains of Rasselas." All England smiled at the mountains of Rasselas. The idea that Johnson actually had in his mind the very Abyssinia of geography and of history, when he described his Happy Valley, was in itself trying to gravity. Of the rhetorical passage, it is proper to speak in the words with which the author of Rasselas once interrupted the too ambitious eloquence of a friend. "Sir, this is sorry stuff," said Dr. Johnson, "let me not hear you say it any more." The worst of Mr. Disraeli's burst of eloquence was, that it could not be got rid of so easily. The orator himself might have gladly consented to let it be heard no more. But the world would not so willingly let it die. Ever since that time, when the expedition to Abyssinia is mentioned in any company, a smile steals over some faces, and more than one voice is heard to murmur an allusion to the mountains of Rasselas.

The widow of King Theodore died in the English camp before the return of the expedition. Theodore's son Alamayou, aged seven years, was taken charge of by Queen Victoria, and for a while educated in India. The boy was afterwards brought to England; but he never

reached maturity. All the care that could be taken of him here did not keep him from withering under the influence of an uncongenial civilisation. His young life was as that of some exotic that will not long bear the transplantation to a foreign air. Doubtless too the premature tumult and troubles of his early years told heavily against him. "There is little difficulty," says the grim leech in the "Fair Maid of Perth," "in blighting a flower exhausted from having been made to bloom too soon."

No attempt was made to interfere with the internal affairs of Abyssinia. Having destroyed their monarchy, the invaders left the Abyssinians to do as they would for the establishment of another. Sir Robert Napier declared one of the chiefs a friend of the British, and this chief had some hopes of obtaining the sovereignty of the country. But his rank as a friend of the British did not prevent him from being defeated in a struggle with a rival, and this rival not long after succeeded in having himself crowned king under the title of John the Second. Another Prester John was set up in Abyssinia.

## CHAPTER LVII

### THE IRISH CHURCH

"THE Irish Peasant to his Mistress" is the name of one of Moore's finest songs. The Irish peasant tells his mistress of his undying fidelity to her. "Through grief and through danger" her smile has cheered his way. "The darker our fortunes the purer thy bright love burned;" it turned shame into glory; fear into zeal. Slave as he was, with her to guide him he felt free. She had a rival; and the rival was honoured, "while thou wert mocked and scorned." The rival wore a crown of gold; the other's brows were girt with thorns. The rival wooed him to temples, while the loved one lay hid in caves. "Her friends were all masters, while thine, alas, are slaves!" "Yet," he declares, "cold in the earth at thy feet I would

rather be than wed one I love not, or turn one thought from thee."

The reader already understands the meaning of this poetic allegory. •If he failed to appreciate its feeling it would be hardly possible for him to understand the modern history of Ireland. The Irish peasant's mistress is the Catholic Church. The rival is the State Church set up by English authority. The worshippers in the Catholic faith had long to lie hid in caves, while the followers of the State Church worshipped in temples. The Irish peasant remained through centuries of persecution devotedly faithful to the Catholic Church. Nothing could win or wean him from it. The Irish population of Ireland—there is meaning in the words—were made apparently by nature for the Catholic faith. Hardly any influence on earth could make the genuine Celtic Irishman a Materialist, or what is called in France a *Voltairean*. For him, as for Schiller's immortal heroine, the kingdom of the spirits is easily opened. Half his thoughts, half his life, belong to a world other than the material world around him. The supernatural becomes almost the natural for him. The streams, the valleys, the hills of his native country are peopled by mystic forms and melancholy legends, which are all but living things for him. Even the railway has not banished from the land his familiar fancies and dreams. The "good people" still linger around the raths and glens. The banshee even yet laments, in dirge-like wailings, the death of the representative of each ancient house. The very superstitions of the Irish peasant take a devotional form. They are never degrading. His piety is not merely sincere: it is even practical. It sustains him against many hard trials, and enables him to bear, in cheerful patience, a lifelong trouble. He praises God for everything; not as an act of mere devotional formality, but as by instinct; the praise naturally rising to his lips. Old men and women in Ireland who seem, to the observer, to have lived lives of nothing but privation and suffering, are heard to murmur with their latest breath the fervent declaration that the Lord was good to them always. Assuredly this genuine piety does not always prevent the wild Celtic nature from breaking forth



into fierce excesses. Stormy outbursts of passion, gusts of savage revenge, too often sweep away the soul of the Irish peasant from the quiet moorings in which his natural piety and the teachings of his Church would hold it. But deep down in his nature is that faith in the other world and its visible connection and intercourse with this ; his reverence for the teaching which shows him a clear title to immortality. For this very reason, when the Irish peasant throws off altogether the guidance of religion, he is apt to rush into worse extravagances and excesses than most other men. He is not made to be a rationalist ; he is made to be a believer.

The Irishman was bound by ties of indescribable strength and complication to his own Church. It was the teacher of that faith which especially commended itself to his nature and his temperament. It was made to be the symbol and the synonym of patriotism and nationality. Centuries of the cruel, futile attempt to force another religion on him in the name of his English conquerors, had made him regard any effort to change his faith, even by argument, as the attempt of a spy to persuade a soldier to forsake his flag. To abandon the Catholic Church was, for the Irishman, not merely to renounce his religion, but to betray his country. It seemed to him that he could not become a Protestant without also becoming a renegade to the national cause. The State Church set up in Ireland was to him a symbol of oppression. It was Gessler's hat stuck up in the market-place ; only a slave would bow down to it. It was idle to tell him of the free spirit of Protestantism ; Protestantism stood represented for him by the authority which had oppressed his fellow-countrymen and fellow-Catholics for generations ; which had hunted men to the caves and the mountains for being Catholic, and had hanged and disembowelled them for being Irish. Almost every page of the history of the two countries was read with a different interpretation by the Irishman and the Englishman. To the English student Spenser was a patriot as well as a poet ; to the Irish scholar he was the bitterest and most unthinking enemy of Ireland. To the Englishman of modern days

Cromwell was a great statesman and patriot ; the Irishman thought of him only as the remorseless oppressor of Ireland and the author of the massacre of Drogheda. The Englishman hated James II. because he fought against England at the Boyne ; the Irishman despised him because he gave up the fight so soon. Chesterfield was to Englishmen a fribble and a fop ; he was to Irishmen of education the one English Lord-Lieutenant who ever seemed to have any comprehension of the real needs of Ireland. Fox was denounced in England and adored in Ireland because he made himself the champion of the principle of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas. One of Byron's chief offences in the eyes of English Conservatives was that his enthusiasm for Ireland was almost equal to his enthusiasm for Greece. Again and again, in every generation, the object of admiration to Englishmen was the object of distrust or dislike, or both, to all Irishmen who professed to have in them anything of the sentiment of nationality. All this feeling of antagonism was undoubtedly strengthened and sharpened by the existence of the State Church. There was not one rational word to be said on principle for the maintenance of such an institution. Sydney Smith said, in his humorous way : " There is no abuse like it in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have heard of Timbuctoo." No foreign statesman probably ever admired English institutions more than Count Cavour did. Yet Cavour wrote that the State Church in Ireland " remains to the Catholics a representative of the cause of their miseries, a sign of defeat and oppression. It exasperates their sufferings and makes their humiliation more keenly felt." Every argument in favour of the State Church in England was an argument against the State Church in Ireland. The English Church, as an institution, is defended on the ground that it represents the religious convictions of the great majority of the English people, and that it is qualified to take welcome charge of those who would otherwise be left without any religious care or teaching in England. The Catholics in Ireland were, to all other denominations together, as five to one ; the State Church represented only a small proportion

of a very small minority. There was not the slightest pretext for affecting to believe that it could become the mother and the guardian of orphans and waifs among the Irish people. In many places the Protestant clergyman preached to a dozen listeners; in some places he thought himself lucky when he could get half-a-dozen. There were places with a Protestant clergyman and Protestant church and absolutely no Protestant worshippers. There had not of late years been much positive hostility to the State Church among the Irish people. Since the abolition of the system of tithes, since the dues of the parson were no longer collected by an armed military force with occasional accompaniment of bloodshed, the bitterness of popular feeling had very much mitigated. The Irish people grew to be almost indifferent on the subject. "With Henry II.," says Sydney Smith, "came in tithes, to which, in all probability, about one million of lives may have been sacrificed in Ireland." All that was changed at last. So long as the clergyman was content to live quietly and mind his own flock, where he had any to mind, his Catholic neighbours were not disposed to trouble themselves much about him. If, indeed, he attempted to do that which, by all strict logical reasoning, he must have regarded himself as appointed to do—if he attempted any work of conversion, then he aroused such a storm of anger that he generally found it prudent to withdraw from the odious and hopeless enterprise. If he was a sensible man he was usually content to minister to his own people and meddle no further with others. In the large towns he generally had his considerable congregation, and was busy enough. In some of the country places of the south and west he preached every Sunday to his little flock of five or six, while the congregation of the Catholic chapel a short distance off were covering great part of the hillside around the chapel door, because their numbers were many times too great to allow them to find room within the building itself. Sydney Smith has described, in a few words, the condition of things as it existed in his time: "On an Irish Sabbath the bell of a neat parish church often summons to church only the parson and an

occasionally conforming clerk; while two hundred yards off a thousand Catholics are huddled together in a miserable hovel and pelted by all the storms of heaven." In days nearer to our own the miserable hovel had for the most part given place to a large and handsome church; in many places to a vast and stately cathedral. Nothing could be more remarkable than the manner in which the voluntary offerings of the Irish Catholics covered the face of the country with churches dedicated to the uses of their faith. Often the contributions came in liberal measure from Irishmen settled in far-off countries who were not likely ever again to see their native fields. Irish Catholic priests crossed the Atlantic, crossed even the Pacific, to ask for help to maintain their churches; and there came from Quebec and Ontario, from New York, New Orleans and Chicago, from Melbourne and Sydney, from Tasmania and New Zealand, the money which put up churches and spires on the Irish mountain-sides. The proportion between the Protestants and the Catholics began to tell more and more disadvantageously for the State Church as years went on. Of late the influx of the Catholic working population into the northern province threatens to overthrow the supremacy of Protestantism in Protestantism's own stronghold.

It has often been said that if England had not persecuted the Catholics, if she had not thrust her State Church on them under circumstances which made it an insolent badge of conquest, the Irish people might have been gradually won over to the religion of England. To us nothing seems more unlikely than any such change. The Irish people, we are convinced, would under any circumstances whatever have remained faithful to the Catholic Church. As we have already endeavoured to show, it is the Church which seems specially appointed to be the guide of their feelings and their nature. But it is certain that if there had been no persecution and no State Church the feelings of the Irish people towards England would have been very different from what they actually are even at this day. There would have been no rebellion of 1798. There would have been no hatred of Protestant to Catholic,

Catholic to Protestant. All this is obvious; every one says as much now. But there is another view of the question; there is another harmful effect of the State Church and its surroundings, which is not so often considered nor so commonly admitted. This is the indirect harm which was done by the setting up in Ireland of a "British Party," to employ a phrase once familiar in politics, a party supposed to represent the interests of the English Government, and indeed to be, as it was commonly called, the Protestant garrison in Ireland. Naturally the Government always acted on the advice of that party, and as a matter of course they were frequently deceived. The British party had no way of getting at the real feelings of the Irish people; they were among them, but not of them. They kept on continually assuring the Government that there was no real cause of dissatisfaction in Ireland; that the objection to this or that odious institution or measure came only from a few agitators, and not from the whole population. It will not be forgotten that down to the very outbreak of the American War of Independence there were the remnants of a British party in the Northern States, who assured the English Government that there was no real dissatisfaction among the American colonists, and no idea whatever of severing the connection with England. The same sort of counsel was given, the same fatal service was rendered, on almost all important occasions by the British party in Ireland. It was probably from observing this condition of things that Mr. Gladstone came to the conclusion that the Fenian outbreak, the Manchester rescue, and the Clerkenwell explosion furnished a proper opportunity for a new system of legislation in Ireland. Few actions on the part of a public man have been more persistently misrepresented or more obstinately misunderstood than the course taken by Mr. Gladstone. It has been constantly asserted that he declared himself impelled to propose new legislation for Ireland by the violence of the Fenian enterprises, and that he thus held out a premium to political agitation of the most audacious kind by offering an assurance to the agitator that if he would

only be daring and lawless enough he might have full gratification of his demands. Yet Mr. Gladstone's meaning was surely plain. He saw that the one great difficulty in the way of substantial legislation for Irish grievances had always been found in the fact that the English Parliament and public did not believe in the reality of the grievance. Englishmen put aside every claim made on behalf of Ireland with the assurance that the Irish people were entirely indifferent on the subject; that the Irish people felt no grievance, and therefore had not complained of any. The Fenian movement was in Mr. Gladstone's eyes the most substantial refutation of this comfortable belief. The most easy-going and self-complacent Philistine could not feel satisfied that there was no grievance pressing on the minds of the Irish people when he found rebellion going on under his very eyes, and Fenian devotees braving death for their cause and its captains in his very streets. Mr. Gladstone was right. One of the sad defects of our parliamentary system is that no remedy is likely to be tried for any evil until the evil has made its presence felt in some startling way. The Clerkenwell explosion was but one illustration of a common condition of things. We seldom have any political reform without a previous explosion.

On March 16, 1868, a remarkable debate took place in the House of Commons. It had for its subject the condition of Ireland, and it was introduced by a series of resolutions which Mr. John Francis Maguire, an Irish member, proposed. Mr. Maguire was a man of high character and great ability and earnestness. He was a newspaper proprietor and an author; he knew Ireland well, but he also knew England and the temper of the English people. He was ardent in his national sympathies; but he was opposed to any movement of a seditious or a violent character. He had more than once risked his popularity among his countrymen by the resolute stand which he made against any agitation that tended towards rebellion. Mr. Maguire always held that the geographical situation of England and Ireland rendered a separation of the two countries impossible. He had often expressed his belief that even in the

event of a war between England and some foreign state—the American Republic, for instance—and even in the event of England's losing temporary possession of Ireland, one of the conditions of peace which the foreign Power would most freely accept would be the handing back of Ireland to Great Britain. To his mind, then, separation was a result not to be seriously thought of. But he accepted cordially the saying of Grattan that if the ocean forbade separation, the sea denied union. He was in favour of a domestic legislature for Ireland, and he was convinced that such a measure would be found the means of establishing a true and genial union of feeling, a friendly partnership between the two countries. Mr. Maguire was looked on with respect and confidence by all parties in England as well as in his own country. Even the Fenians, whose schemes he condemned as he had condemned the Young Ireland movement of 1848, were willing to admit his honesty and his courage, for they found that there was no stauncher advocate in Parliament for a generous dealing with the Fenian prisoners. A speaker of remarkable power and earnestness, although occasionally too vehement of words and gesture, he was always listened to with attention in the House of Commons. It was well known that he had declined tenders of office from both of the great English parties; and it was known too that he had done this at a time when his personal interests made his refusal a considerable sacrifice. When therefore he invited the attention of the House of Commons to the condition of Ireland, the House knew that it was likely to have a fair and a trustworthy exposition of the subject. In the course of his speech, Mr. Maguire laid great stress upon the evil effect wrought upon Ireland by the existence of the Irish Church. He described it as “a scandalous and monstrous anomaly.” During the debate Lord Mayo, then Irish Secretary, made a speech in which he threw out some hint about a policy of equalising all religious denominations in Ireland without sacrificing the Irish Church. He talked in a mysterious way of “levelling up, and not levelling down.” It has never since been known for certain whether he was giving a hint of a scheme actually in the mind of

the Government ; whether he was speaking as one set up to feel his way into the opinion of the House of Commons and the public ; or whether he was only following out some sudden and irresponsible speculations of his own. The words, however, produced a great effect on the House of Commons. It became evident at once that the question of the Irish Church was making itself at last a subject for the practical politician. Mr. Bright in the course of the debate strongly denounced the Irish Establishment, and enjoined the Government and all the great English parties to rise to the occasion and resolve to deal in some serious way with the condition of Ireland. Difficulties of the gravest nature he fully admitted were yet in the way, but he reminded the House in tones of solemn and penetrating earnestness that "to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." But it was on the fourth night of the debate that the importance of the occasion became fully manifest. Then it was that Mr. Gladstone spoke, and declared that in his opinion the time had come when the Irish Church as a State institution must cease to exist. Then every man in the House knew that the end was near. Mr. Maguire withdrew his resolutions. The cause he had to serve was now in the hands of one who, though not surely more earnest for its success, had incomparably greater power to serve it. The Protestant garrison in Ireland was doomed. There was probably not a single Englishman capable of forming an opinion who did not know that from the moment when Mr. Gladstone made his declaration, the fall of the Irish State Church had become merely a question of time. Men only waited to see how Mr. Gladstone would proceed to procure its fall.

Public expectation was not long kept in suspense. A few days after the debate on Mr. Maguire's motion, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of a series of resolutions on the subject of the Irish State Church. The resolutions were three in number. The first declared that in the opinion of the House of Commons it was necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property. The



second resolution pronounced it expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage; and the third asked for an address to the Queen, praying that her Majesty would place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities of the Irish Church. The object of these resolutions was simply to prepare for the actual disestablishment of the Church, by providing that no further appointments should be made, and that the action of patronage should be stayed, until Parliament should decide the fate of the whole institution. On March 30, 1868, Mr. Gladstone proposed his resolutions. Not many persons could have had much doubt as to the result of the debate. But if there were any such their doubts must have begun to vanish when they read the notice of amendment to the resolutions which was given by Lord Stanley. The amendment proclaimed even more surely than the resolutions the impending fall of the Irish Church. Lord Stanley must have been supposed to speak in the name of the Government and the Conservative party; and his amendment merely declared that the House, while admitting that considerable modifications in the temporalities of the Church in Ireland might appear to be expedient, was of opinion "that any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of that Church ought to be reserved for the decision of the new Parliament." Mr. Gladstone seized on the evidence offered by the terms of such an amendment. He observed that before the hour at which notice was given of that amendment, he had thought the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short, but since the notice was given he thought it shorter still. For, as Mr. Gladstone put it, suppose his resolutions had been declarations calling for the abolition of the House of Lords, was it possible to conceive that the Government would have met them by an amendment admitting that the constitution of the Upper House might appear to stand in need of considerable modification, but offering the opinion that any proposal tending to the abolition of that House ought to be left to the decision of a new Parliament? If such an amendment were offered

by the Government, the whole country would at once understand that it was not intended to defend the existence of the House of Lords. So the country now understood with regard to the Irish Church. Lord Stanley's amendment asked only for delay. It did not plead that to-morrow would be sudden; it only asked that the stroke of doom should not be allowed to fall on the Irish Church to-day.

The debate was one of great power and interest. Some of the speakers were heard at their very best. Mr. Bright made a speech which was well worthy of the occasion and the orator. Mr. Gathorne Hardy was in his very element. He flung aside all consideration of amendment, compromise, or delay, and went in for a vehement defence of the Irish Church. He spoke in the spirit of M. Rouher's famous *Jamais!* Mr. Hardy was not a debater of keen logical power nor an actor of genuine inspiration, but he always could rattle a defiant drum with excellent effect. He beat the war-drum this time with tremendous energy. On the other hand Mr. Lowe threw an intensity of bitterness remarkable even for him into the unsparing logic with which he assailed the Irish Church. That Church, he said, was "like an exotic brought from a far country, tended with infinite pains and useless trouble. It is kept alive with the greatest difficulty and at great expense in an ungenial climate and an ungrateful soil. The curse of barrenness is upon it. It has no leaves, puts forth no blossom, and yields no fruit. Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Not the least remarkable speech of the debate was that made by Lord Cranborne, who denounced the Government of which he was not long since a member with an energy of hatred almost like ferocity. He accused his late colleagues of having in every possible way betrayed the cause of Conservatism, and he assailed Mr. Disraeli personally in a manner which made older members think of the days when Mr. Disraeli was denouncing Sir Robert Peel. No eloquence and no invective however could stay the movement begun by Mr. Gladstone. When the division was called there were 270 votes for the amendment, and 331 against it. The doom of the Irish Church was pronounced by a majority of 61. Mr. Disraeli made a wild

effort by speech and by letter to get up an alarm in the country on the score of some imaginary alliance or conspiracy between "High Church Ritualists" and "Irish Romanists." The attempt was a complete failure; there was only a little flash; no explosion came. The country did not show the slightest alarm. An interval was afforded for agitation on both sides. The House of Commons had only decided against Lord Stanley's amendment. Mr. Gladstone's resolutions had yet to be discussed. Lord Russell presided at a great meeting held in St. James's Hall for the purpose of expressing public sympathy with the movement to disestablish the Irish Church. Many meetings were held by those on the other side of the question as well; but it was obvious to every one that there was no great force in the attempt at a defence of the Irish Church. That institution had in truth a position which only became less and less defensible the more it was studied. Every example and argument drawn from the history of the Church of England, was but another condemnation of the Church of Ireland. During one of the subsequent debates in the House of Lords, Lord Derby introduced with remarkable effect an appropriate quotation from Scott's "Guy Mannering." He was warning his listeners that if they helped the enemies of the Irish Church to pull it down, they would be preparing the way for the destruction of the English Church as well. He turned to that striking passage in "Guy Mannering," where Meg Merrilies confronts the laird of Ellangowan after the eviction of the gipsies, and warns him that "this day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths;—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that; ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses—look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster." Nothing could be more apt as a political appeal or more effective in a rhetorical sense than this quotation. But it did not illustrate the relations between the English and the Irish Church. The real danger to the English Church would have been a protracted and obstinate maintenance of the Church of Ireland. It is not necessary here to enter upon any of the general arguments for or against the principle of a State Church. But it will be admitted

by every one that the claim made on behalf of the Church of England is that it is the Church of the great majority of the English people, and that it has a spiritual work to do which the majority of the nation admit to be its appropriate task. To maintain the Church of England on that ground is only to condemn the Church of Ireland. The more strongly an Englishman was inclined to support his own Church, the more anxious he ought to have been to repudiate the claim of the Irish Church to a similar position. The State Church in Ireland was like a mildewed ear blasting its wholesome brother. If the two institutions had to stand or fall together, there could be but one end to the difficulty; both must fall.

Mr. Gladstone's first resolution came to a division about a month after the defeat of Lord Stanley's amendment. It was carried by a majority somewhat larger than that which had rejected the amendment. 330 votes were given for the resolution; 265 against it. The majority for the resolution was therefore 65. Mr. Disraeli quietly observed that the Government must take some decisive step in consequence of that vote; and a few days afterwards it was announced that as soon as the necessary business could be got through, Parliament would be dissolved and an appeal made to the country. On the last day of July the dissolution took place, and the elections came on in November. Not for many years had there been so important a general election. The keenest anxiety prevailed as to its results. The new constituencies created by the Reform Bill were to give their votes for the first time. The question at issue was not merely the existence of the Irish State Church. It was a general struggle of advanced Liberalism against Toryism. No one could doubt that Mr. Gladstone, if he came into power, would enter on a policy of more decided Liberalism than had ever been put into action since the days of the Reform Bill of Lord Grey and Lord John Russell. The result of the elections was on the whole what might have been expected. The Liberals had a great majority. But there were many curious and striking instances of the growing strength of Conservatism in certain parts of the country. Lancashire,

once a very stronghold of Liberalism, returned only Tories for its county divisions, and even in most cases elected Tories to represent its boroughs. Eight Conservatives came in for the county of Lancaster, and among those whom their election displaced were no less eminent persons than Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington. Mr. Gladstone was defeated in South-west Lancashire, but the result of the contest had been generally anticipated, and therefore some of his supporters put him up for Greenwich also and he was elected there. He had been passing step by step from less popular to more popular constituencies. From the University of Oxford he had passed to the Lancashire division, and now from the Lancashire constituency he went on to a place where the Liberal portion of the electors were inclined, for the most part, to be not merely Radical but democratic. The contest in North Lancashire was made more interesting than it would otherwise have been by the fact that it was not alone a struggle between opposing principles and parties, but also one between two great rival houses. Lord Hartington represented the great Cavendish family. Mr. Frederick Stanley was the younger son of Lord Derby. Lord Hartington was defeated by a large majority, and was left out of Parliament for a few months. He was afterwards elected for the Radnor Boroughs. Mr. Mill was defeated at Westminster. His defeat was brought about by a combination of causes. He had been elected in a moment of sudden enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm had now had time to cool away. He had given some offence in various quarters by a too great independence of action and of expression. On many questions of deep interest he had shown that he was entirely out of harmony with the views of the vast majority of his constituents, whatever their religious denomination might be. He had done some things which people called eccentric, and an English popular constituency does not love eccentricity. His opponent, Mr. W. H. Smith, was very popular in Westminster, and had been quietly canvassing it for years. Perhaps it may be hinted too that Mr. Mill's manly resolve not to pay any part of his election expenses did not contribute to make him a favourite candidate with

a certain proportion of the constituency. He was known to be a generous and a charitable man. He gave largely out of his modest fortune towards any purpose which he thought deserving of support. But he disapproved of the principle of calling on a candidate to pay for permission to perform very onerous public duties, and he would not consent to recognise the principle by contributing anything towards the cost of his own candidature. This was against him in the mind of many. In every great constituency there is a certain proportion of voters who like the idea of a man's being liberal of his money in a contest, even though they do not expect to have any share of it. Some of the Westminster electors had probably grown tired of being represented by one who was called a philosopher. Some other prominent public men lost their seats. Mr. Roebuck was defeated in Sheffield. His defeat was partly due to the strong stand he had made against the trades-unions; but still more to the bitterness of the hostility he had shown to the Northern States during the American Civil War. Mr. Milner Gibson and Mr. Bernal Osborne were also unseated. The latter got into Parliament again. The former disappeared from public life. He had done good service at one time as an ally of Cobden and Bright. Mr. Lowe was elected the first representative of the University of London, on which, as it will be remembered, the Conservative Reform Bill had conferred a seat. Mr. Disraeli afterwards humorously claimed the credit of having enabled Mr. Lowe to carry on his public career by providing for him the only constituency in England which would have accepted him as its representative. One curious fact about the elections was that the extreme democratic candidates, and those who were called the working men's candidates, were in every instance rejected. This was the first general election with household suffrage in boroughs and a lowered franchise in counties. It might have been supposed that the votes of the working men, of "the people who live in those small houses," would have decided many a contest in favour of the candidates representing their cause or their class. But the candidates who appealed especially to working men failed in every instance to secure election.

Mr. Ernest Jones, Mr. Beales, Mr. Mason Jones, Mr. Odger, Mr. Bradlaugh, tried and failed. Either our new masters were not so powerful as they were expected to prove, or they were very much like our old masters in their taste for representation. The new Parliament was to all appearance less marked in its Liberalism than that which had gone before it. But so far as mere numbers went the Liberal party was much stronger than it had been. In the new House of Commons it could count upon a majority of about 120, whereas in the late Parliament it had but 60. Mr. Gladstone it was clear would now have everything in his own hands, and the country might look for a career of energetic reform.

While the debates on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were still going on there came to England the news that Lord Brougham was dead. He had died at Cannes in his ninetieth year. His death was a quiet passing away from a world that had well-nigh forgotten him. Seldom has a political career been so strangely cut short as that of Lord Brougham. From the time when the Whig Administration was formed without him, he seemed to have no particular business in public life. He never had from that hour the slightest influence on any political party or any political movement. His restless figure was seen moving about the House of Lords like that of a man who felt himself out of place there, and was therefore out of humour with himself and his company. He often took part in debate, and for many years he continued to show all the fire and energy of his earlier days. But of late he had almost entirely dropped out of politics. Happily for him the Social Science Association was formed, and he acted for a long time as its principal guide, philosopher, and friend. He made speeches at its meetings, presided at many of its banquets, and sometimes showed that he could still command the resources of a massive eloquence. His social science had a curious air of unreality about it. It seemed as if it had been hastily put together out of that *Penny Cyclopædia* in which at one time he had so much concern. The men of the younger generation looked at him with interest and wonder; they found it hard to

realise the fact that only a few years before he was one of the most conspicuous and energetic figures in political agitation. Now he seemed oddly like some dethroned king who occupies his leisure in botanical studies ; some once famous commander, long out of harness, who amuses himself with learning the flute. There were perhaps some who forgot Brougham the great reformer altogether, and only thought of Brougham the patron and orator of the Social Science Association. He passed his time between Cannes, which he may be said to have discovered, and London. At one time he had had the idea of actually becoming a citizen of France, being of opinion that it would set a good example for the brotherhood of peoples if he were to show how a man could be a French and an English citizen at the same moment. He had outlived nearly all his early friends and foes. Melbourne, Grey, Durham, Campbell, Lyndhurst, had passed away. The death of Lyndhurst had been a great grief to him. It is said that in his failing, later years he often directed his coachman to drive him to Lord Lyndhurst's house, as if his old friend and gossip were still among the living. At last Brougham began to give unmistakable signs of vanishing intelligence. His appearances in public were mournful exhibitions. He sometimes sat at a dinner party and talked loudly to himself of something which had no concern with the time, the place, or the company. His death created but a mere momentary thrill of emotion in England. He had made bitter enemies and cherished strong hatreds in his active years ; and like all men who have strong hatreds, he had warm affections too. But the close friends and the bitter enemies were gone alike ; had "passed like snow, long, long ago, with the time of the Barmecides" ; and the agitation about the Irish Church was scarcely interrupted for a moment by the news of his death. Brougham's writings are not read now. No one turns to his speeches ; those speeches that once set England aflame. His philosophy, his learning, his science, his Greek were all so curiously superficial, that it is no wonder if enemies sometimes declared them to be mere sham. As the memoirs of his contemporaries begin to be pub-



lished we receive more and more evidence of the prodigious vanity which made Brougham believe that no one could do anything so well in any department as he could do everything in every department! The *Edinburgh Review* he appears to have regarded as a means by which he was to display the genius and acquirements, and others were to puff the speeches, of Henry Brougham. A strange sight was seen one day at a meeting of the Social Science Association, when Lord Brougham, then on the eve of his complete intellectual decline, introduced to the company a man so old that he seemed to belong to an elder world altogether; a man with a wasted, wrinkled, wizard-like face, who wore a black silk skull-cap and a gaberdine. This was Robert Owen, and it was Owen's last appearance in public. He died a few days after in his ninetieth year. Brougham at that time was ten years younger, and he introduced Owen with all the respectful and almost filial carefulness which sturdy youth might show to sinking age. For the moment it would almost seem as if the self-conceit which made Brougham believe himself a great critic and a great Greek scholar, had made him also believe that for him time was nothing, and that he was still a young man.

## CHAPTER LVIII

### "IRISH IDEAS"

SEVENTY years before Mr. Gladstone's accession to the office of First Lord of the Treasury, Fox had enunciated the principle that Ireland ought to be governed by Irish ideas. "I would have the Irish Government," said Fox in 1797, "regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and I firmly believe, according to an Irish expression, that the more she is under Irish government, the more she will be bound to English interests." Now for the first time a great statesman at the head of an English Government was about to make an effort at the practical realisation of Fox's principle. At all other times even the most considerate

of English Ministers had only thought of doing good to Ireland after the English notion of what was good. The highest idea of statesmanship went no further than that of giving Ireland what were called equal laws with England. What England had and liked must be the best for Ireland. Such was the position assumed with quiet, sincere complacency in the course of many a parliamentary debate. What more, it was asked, can Ireland want? Has she not equal laws with England? We have a State Church; she has a State Church. She has the same land laws that are found to suit England, or, at least, that are found to suit the landlord class in England. What can England do for her more than to give her the same legislation that England herself enjoys? Now, for the first time, the man at the head of an English Government was equal to an acknowledgment of what one might have thought the simple and elementary fact in politics, that the system which is a blessing to one country may be a curse to its neighbour. That which is called equality of system is sometimes only such equality as that illustrated by the too often quoted yet very appropriate example of Procrustes' bed. Ireland had been stretched upon that bed for centuries, often with the best possible intentions on the part of some well-meaning political Procrustes, who could not for the life of him see why she should not like to be lengthened or shortened, pulled this way or that, in order to bring her into seeming harmony with the habitudes and the constitutional systems of England.

The Parliament which was called together in the close of 1868 was known to have before it this great task of endeavouring to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas. Mr. Gladstone had proclaimed this purpose himself. He had made it known that he would endeavour to deal with Ireland's three great difficulties—the State Church, the tenure of land, and the system of national education. Men's minds were wrought up to the enterprise. The country was in a temper to try heroic remedies. The public were tired of government which merely tinkered at legislation, putting in a little patch here, and stopping up for the moment a little hole there. Perhaps, therefore,

there was a certain disappointment as the general character of the new Parliament began to be understood. The eminent men on whom all eyes turned in the old Parliament were to be seen of all eyes in the new. It was clear that Mr. Gladstone would be master of the situation. But there did not seem anything particularly hero-like in the general aspect of the new House of Commons. Its composition was very much the same as that of the old. Vast sums of money had been spent upon the elections. Rich men were, as before, in immense preponderance. Elder and younger sons of great families were as many as ever. The English constituencies under the new suffrage were evidently no whit less fond of lords, no whit less devoted to wealth, than they had been under the old. Not a single man of extreme democratic opinions had a seat in the new House of Commons. Where any marked change had been made it showed itself in removing such men from Parliament rather than in returning them to it.

Mr. Disraeli did not meet the new Parliament as Prime Minister. He decided very properly that it would be a mere waste of public time to wait for the formal vote of the House of Commons, which would inevitably command him to surrender. He at once resigned his office, and Mr. Gladstone was immediately sent for by the Queen, and invited to form an Administration. Mr. Gladstone, it would seem, was only beginning his career. He was nearly sixty years of age, but there were scarcely any evidences of advancing years to be seen on his face, and he had all the fire of proud, indomitable youth in his voice and his manner. He had come into office at the head of a powerful party. There was hardly anything he could not do with such a following and with such personal energy. The Government he formed was one of remarkable strength. The one name upon its list, after that of the Prime Minister himself, which engaged the interest of the public was that of Mr. Bright. Speaking to his Birmingham constituents on his re-election after accepting the office of the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Bright referred to his new position in a few sentences of impressive and dignified eloquence. He had not sought office, he

said; it had come to him. "I should have preferred much to remain in the common rank of the simple citizenship in which heretofore I have lived. There is a charming story contained in a single verse of the Old Testament, which has often struck me as one of great beauty. Many of you will recollect that the prophet, in journeying to and fro, was very hospitably entertained by what is termed in the Bible a Shunammite woman. In return for the hospitality of his entertainment he wished to make her some amends, and he called her and asked her what there was that he should do for her. 'Shall I speak for thee to the king or to the captain of the host?' and it has always appeared to me a great answer that the Shunammite woman returned. She said, 'I dwell among my own people.' When the question was put to me whether I would step into the position in which I now find myself, the answer from my heart was the same—I wish to dwell among my own people." It was impossible, however, that a ministry could now be formed without Mr. Bright's name appearing in it. Mr. Gladstone at first offered him the office of Secretary of State for India. The state of Mr. Bright's health would not allow him to undertake the very laborious duties of such a place, and probably in any case it would have been repugnant to his feelings to accept a position which might have called on him to give orders for the undertaking of a war. Every man in a Cabinet is of course responsible for all its acts; but there is still an evident difference, so far as personal feeling is concerned, between acquiescing in some inevitable policy of war and actually directing that war shall be made. The position of President of the Board of Trade was that which had been offered by Lord Palmerston to Mr. Bright's old friend, Richard Cobden, and it seemed in every way well suited to Mr. Bright himself. Many men felt a doubt as to the possibility of Mr. Bright's subduing his personal independence and his outspoken ways to the discipline and reticence of a Cabinet, and Mr. Bright himself appeared to be a little afraid that he should be understood as thoroughly approving of every measure in which he might, by official order, feel compelled to acquiesce. He cautioned his Birmingham

constituents not to believe that he had changed any of his opinions until his own voice publicly proclaimed the change, and he made what might almost be called an appeal to them to remember that he was now one man serving in a band of men; no longer responsible only for himself, no longer independent of the acts of others.

Lord Granville was Secretary for the Colonies under the new Administration; Lord Clarendon Foreign Secretary. The Duke of Argyll was entrusted with the Indian Office. Mr. Cardwell, to all appearance one of the coldest and least warlike of men, was made Secretary for War, and had in his charge one of the greatest reforms of the administration. Lord Hartington, Lord Dufferin, Mr. Childers, and Mr. Bruce had places assigned to them. Mr. Layard became First Commissioner of Public Works. Mr. W. E. Forster had the office of Vice-President of the Council, and came in for work hardly less important than that of the Prime Minister himself. The Lord Chancellor was Lord Hatherley, formerly Sir William Page Wood. Many years before, when Lord Hatherley was only known as a rising man among advanced Liberals, and when Mr. Bright was still regarded by all true Conservatives as a Radical demagogue, Mr. Bright and Mr. Wood were talking of the political possibilities of the future. Mr. Bright jestingly expressed a hope that whenever he came to be member of a Cabinet, Mr. Wood might be the Lord Chancellor. Nothing could then have seemed less likely to come to pass. As Lord Hatherley and Mr. Bright met on their way to Windsor to wait on the Queen, Mr. Bright reminded his colleague of the jest that had apparently been prophetic.

Mr. Gladstone went to work at once with his Irish policy. The new Parliament was opened by commission on December 10, for the election of the Speaker and the swearing in of the members. The real work of the session began on the 16th of the following February 1869. The Royal speech declared that the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland would be brought under the consideration of the House at a very early date, and that "the legislation which will be necessary in order to their final adjust-

ment will make the largest demands on the wisdom of Parliament." The Queen expressed her conviction that Parliament, in considering that legislation, would "be governed by the constant aim to promote the welfare of religion through the principles of equal justice ; to secure the action of the undivided feeling and opinion of Ireland on the side of loyalty and law ; to efface the memory of former contentions, and to cherish the sympathies of an affectionate people." On March 1 the Prime Minister introduced his measure for the disestablishment and the partial disendowment of the Irish State Church. He introduced the measure in a speech which occupied more than three hours in the delivery, but which even Mr. Disraeli admitted did not contain one sentence that the subject and the argument could well have spared.

The proposals of the Government were, that the Irish Church should almost at once cease to exist as a State establishment, and should pass into the condition of a free Episcopal Church. As a matter of course the Irish bishops were to lose their seats in the House of Lords. A synodal, or governing body, was to be elected from the clergy and laity of the Church and was to be recognised by the Government, and duly incorporated. The union between the Churches of England and Ireland was to be dissolved, and the Irish Ecclesiastical Courts were to be abolished. There were various and complicated arrangements for the protection of the life interests of those already holding positions in the Irish Church, and for the appropriation of the fund which would return to the possession of the State when all these interests had been fairly considered and dealt with. It must be owned that the Government dealt with vested interests in no niggard spirit. If they erred at all they erred on the side of too much generosity. But they had arrayed against them adversaries so strong that they probably felt it absolutely necessary to buy off some of the opposition by a liberal compensation to all those who were to be deprived of their dignity as clergymen of a State Church. When, however, all had been paid off who could establish any claim, and some perhaps who had in strict fairness no

claim whatever, there remained a large fund at the disposal of the Government. This they resolved to set apart for the relief of unavoidable suffering in Ireland. It was not made very clear in the bill itself what the precise purposes were to which the surplus was to be applied, and there was a good deal of disputation afterwards as to the appropriation of the money. Mr. Gladstone's words, and the words used in the preamble of the bill, were the relief of "unavoidable calamity and suffering." Mr. Gladstone spoke of making provision for the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, for reformatories, the training of nurses, and the support of county infirmaries. In a speech delivered at a later stage of the debate, Mr. Bright asked the House whether it would not be better to dispose of the money in such charitable dealing than in continuing to maintain three times the number of clergymen that could be of the slightest use to the Church with which they were connected. "We can," he said, "do but little, it is true. We cannot re-illumine the extinguished lamp of reason; we cannot make the deaf to hear; we cannot make the dumb to speak; it is not given to us

From the thick film to purge the visual ray,  
And on the sightless eyeballs pour the day;

but at least we can lessen the load of affliction, and we can make life more tolerable to vast numbers who suffer." The sum to be disposed of was very considerable. The gross value of the Irish Church property was estimated at sixteen millions. From this sum would have to be deducted nearly five millions for the vested interests of incumbents; one million seven hundred thousand for compensations to curates and lay compensations; half a million for private endowments; for the Maynooth Grant and the Regium Donum about a million and a quarter. There would be left nearly nine millions for any beneficent purpose on which the Government and the country could make up their minds. The Maynooth Grant and the Regium Donum were to go with the Irish Church, and the same principle of compensation was to be applied to those who were to be deprived of them. The Regium

Donum was an allowance from the Sovereign for the maintenance of Presbyterian ministers in Ireland. It was begun by Charles II. and let drop by James, but was restored by William III. William felt grateful for the support given him by the Presbyterians in Ireland during his contest with James, and indeed had little preference for one form of the Protestant faith over another. William, in the first instance, fixed the grant as a charge upon the customs of Belfast. The Maynooth Grant has been already described in these pages. Both these grants, each a very small thing in itself, now came to an end, and the principle of equality among the religious denominations of Ireland was to be established.

We need not carry the reader through the long course of the debates which took place in the House of Commons. The bill was stoutly resisted by Mr. Disraeli and his party. They resisted it as a whole, and they also fought it in detail. They proposed amendment after amendment in committee, and did all they could to stay its progress as well as to alter some of its arrangements. But there did not seem to be much of genuine earnestness in the speeches made by Mr. Disraeli. The fact that resistance was evidently hopeless had no doubt some effect upon the style of his eloquence. His speeches were amusing rather than impressive. They were full of good points; they sparkled with happy illustrations and allusions, odd conceits and bewildering paradoxes. But the orator had evidently no faith in the cause he advocated; no faith, that is to say, in the possibility of its success. He must have seen too clearly that the Church as a State establishment in Ireland was doomed, and he had not that intensity of interest in its maintenance which would have made him fight the course, as he had fought many a course before, with all the passionate eloquence of desperation. One of his lieutenants, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, was more effective as a champion of the sinking Irish Church than Mr. Disraeli proved himself to be. Mr. Hardy was a man so constituted as to be only capable of seeing one side of a question at a time. He was filled with the conviction that the Government were attempting an act of spoliation



and sacrilege, and he stormed against the meditated crime with a genuine energy which occasionally seemed to supply him with something like eloquence. A peculiar interest attached to the part taken in the debate by Sir Roundell Palmer. It was natural that Sir Roundell Palmer should be with Mr. Gladstone. Every one expected in the first instance that he would have held high office in the new Administration. He was one of the very foremost lawyers and the best parliamentary debaters of the day, and the woolsack seemed to be his fitting place. But Sir Roundell Palmer could not conscientiously agree to the disestablishment of the Irish State Church. He was willing to consent to very extensive alterations and reductions in the Establishment, but he could not go with Mr. Gladstone all the way to the abolition of the Church; and he therefore remained outside the Ministry, and opposed the bill. Some of the debates in the House of Lords were more interesting than those in the Commons. We have already referred to the eloquence and fervour with which Lord Derby opposed the proposition of the Government. Two speeches delivered from the bench where the bishops sit attracted special attention. One may be said to have marked the close, the other the opening, of a career. One was by Dr. Thirlwall, the Bishop of St. David's, the other by Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough. The Bishop of St. David's spoke in favour of the bill, and addressed himself particularly to the demolition of the superstitious sophism which would lead people to believe that the revenues of a purely human institution like the Irish Church were the sacred possession of Heaven, and that to touch them even with the hand of reforming legislation would be an act of sacrilege. Dr. Thirlwall well maintained on this occasion his noble reputation both as an orator and as a man of intellect. Mr. Mill, in his "Autobiography," has given an interesting account of his first hearing Dr. Thirlwall at one of the public discussions of a society in London some forty years ago. "The speaker with whom I was most struck," Mr. Mill says, "was Thirlwall, the historian, since Bishop of St. David's, then a Chancery barrister, unknown except by a high reputation for eloquence

acquired at the Cambridge union before the era of Austin and Macaulay. His speech was in answer to one of mine. Before he had uttered ten sentences, I set him down as the best speaker I had ever heard, and I have never since heard any one whom I placed above him." Dr. Magee, on the other hand, was only beginning his career in the House of Lords. He had been but a short time Bishop of Peterborough. He had been raised to the episcopal bench, it was said, chiefly because Mr. Disraeli when in office believed he saw in him the capacity to make a great parliamentary debater and champion of the political interests of the Church. Dr. Magee delivered a speech of remarkable fluency, energy, and vividness; a speech which might fairly be classed among the best efforts of the leading orators on either side of the controversy. It was more like the speech of a layman than of a prelate; although indeed it recalled in some of its pugnacious passages the recollection of the fighting bishops of the Middle Ages. If the fate of the Irish Church could have been averted or even postponed by impassioned eloquence, the Bishop of Peterborough might alone have done something to stay the stroke of doom. But the fate of the institution was sealed at the moment that Mr. Gladstone returned from the general elections in command of a Liberal majority. The House of Lords were prudent enough not to set themselves against the clear declaration of national opinion. Many amendments were introduced and discussed; and some of these led to a controversy between the two Houses of Parliament; but the controversy ended in compromise. There were at one time rumours that the Peers would reject or greatly delay the bill, and Mr. Bright wrote an angry letter on the subject addressed to a Birmingham meeting, in which he warned the House of Lords that by throwing themselves athwart the national course they might meet with "accidents not pleasant for them to think of." Such a letter coming from a Cabinet Minister created a good deal of amazement, and was made the subject of some sharp discussion in both Houses of Parliament. It was clear that Mr. Bright did not intend to allow his official position to

interfere greatly with the emphatic nature of his utterances on public questions. Shocked and scandalised as some of the Peers professed to be, it is not impossible that the letter did some public service by virtue of its indiscretion. It may have given timely warning to the House of Lords of the dangerous agitation that would arise if they were to set themselves in deliberate opposition to the will of the vast majority of the people. Rumours too were in circulation about the same time of the determination of the Government to create new Peers in such a number as to make the passing of the bill a certainty. Happily, however, it proved that there was no need for any such intervention on the part of the Ministers and the Crown. The time had gone by when the House of Lords cared to exhibit itself as a mere instrument of resistance to the measures of the representative chamber. The most formidable steps the Peers took was to carry on the debate on the second reading of the bill until three o'clock in the morning. The second reading was carried by 179 to 146 votes; and the remainder of the work done by the Lords was only a series of attempts, generally unsuccessful, to obtain here and there a small compromise on some of the less important clauses of the bill. On July 26, 1869, the measure for the disestablishment of the Irish Church received the royal assent.

Meanwhile the wildest excitement prevailed out of doors among the defenders of the State Church. Furious denunciations of the Government resounded from platform and from pulpit. Even in measured and solemn Convocation itself the most impassioned and vehement outcries were heard. One divine spoke of the measure as a great national sin. Another stigmatised it as altogether ungodly, wicked, and abominable. A third called upon the Queen to interfere personally, and exhorted her rather to jeopardise her crown in the effort than leave the Irish Church to be destroyed before her eyes. A great meeting was held in Exeter Hall, at which Mr. Gladstone was stigmatised as "a traitor to the Queen, his country, and his God," and one reverend gentleman described the Government as "a cabinet of brigands." At a meeting held in Ireland a Protestant clergyman reminded the pastors of every

Protestant church that, sooner than give their churches up to any apostate system, a barrel of gunpowder and a box of matches would send them flying to the winds of heaven. This was only superfluous fury. No one proposed to turn the Protestant clergymen out of their churches. It is not impossible that the fiery ecclesiastic who gave this Guy Fawkes advice was himself ministering in a church which had been taken by force from its Catholic owners. The agitation against the bill produced no sensible effect upon the mind of the country at large. It thundered and blazed for a few days or weeks here and there, and then, after occasional grumblings and sputterings, sank into mere silence.

The Irish Church was therefore disestablished, and it was to a certain extent disendowed. Only to a certain extent. As fortunate as Cleopatra, it contrived to retain enough to purchase what it had made known. The time during which the measure was in progress was turned to good account by the authorities of the Establishment. The bill provided that no new interests should be created in the interval between its passing and the actual disestablishment, which was to take place on January 1, 1871. But while the measure was still under discussion some of the rulers of the Church thought it convenient to create as many new interests as possible. New curates entitled to compensation were made with an astonishing rapidity, and the incomes of some of the clergy were increased with liberal hand. Some sharp controversy was afterwards created by the manner in which the period of grace was thus turned to worldly and profitable account, and there can be little doubt that the effect of the policy of disestablishment was deprived of some of its satisfactory influence on the mind of Ireland by the over-liberal opportunities for compensation allowed to vested interests. It would be impossible, however, not to admit that the difficulties in Mr. Gladstone's way must have warned him that a rigorous dealing with such interests would prove dangerous to the success of his measure. The great fact was that by disestablishing the Irish Church he proclaimed that the policy of religious ascendancy was banished for ever from Ireland, and that the reign of equality had begun.

Lord Derby did not long survive the passing of the measure which he had opposed with such fervour and so much pathetic dignity. His last speech was that which he delivered in the House of Lords against the second reading of the Irish Church Bill on June 17, 1859. "I am an old man," he said; "I have already passed three score years and ten. My official life is entirely closed, my political life is nearly so, and in the course of nature my natural life cannot now be long." It was sooner ended perhaps than any one expected who heard him deliver that last eloquent protest against a measure of reform which he was unable to resist. He died before the Irish State Church had ceased to live. Doomed as it was, it outlasted its eloquent champion. In the interval between the passing and the practical operation of Mr. Gladstone's bill, on October 23, Lord Derby died at Knowsley, the residence of the Stanleys in Lancashire. His death made no great gap in English politics. He had for some time ceased to assert any really influential place in public affairs. His career had been eminent and distinguished; but its day had long been done. Lord Derby never was a statesman; he was not even a great leader of a party; but he was a splendid figure-head for Conservatism in or out of power. He was, on the whole, a superb specimen of the English political nobleman. Proud of soul, but sweet in temper and genial in manner; dignified as men are who feel instinctively that dignity pertains to them, and therefore never think of how to assert or to maintain it, he was eminently fitted by temperament, by nature, and by fortune for the place it was given him to hold. His parliamentary oratory has already become a tradition. It served its purpose admirably for the time; it showed, as Macaulay said, that Lord Derby possessed the very instinct of parliamentary debate. It was not weighted with the thought which could have secured it a permanent place in political literature, nor had it the imagination which would have lifted it into an atmosphere above the level of Hansard. In Lord Derby's own day the unanimous opinion of both Houses of Parliament would have given him a place among the very foremost of parliamentary orators. Many competent judges went so far as

to set him distinctly above all living rivals. Time has not ratified this judgment. It is impossible that the influence of an orator could have faded so soon if he had really been entitled to the praise which many of his contemporaries would freely have rendered to Lord Derby. The charm of his voice and style, his buoyant readiness, his rushing fluency, his rich profusion of words, his happy knack of illustration, allusion, and retort—all these helped to make men believe him a much greater orator than he really was. Something, too, was due to the influence of his position. It seemed a sort of condescension on the part of a great noble that he should consent to be an eloquent debater also, and to contend in parliamentary sword-play against professional champions like Peel and O'Connell and Brougham. It must count for something in Lord Derby's fame that, while far inferior to any of these men in political knowledge and in mental capacity, he could compare as an orator with each in turn, and—were it but for his own day, were it but while the magic of his presence and his voice was yet a living influence—could be held by so many to have borne without disadvantage the test of comparison.

When the Irish Church had been disposed of, Mr. Gladstone at once directed his energies to the Irish land system. The State Church had been declared by many to be merely a sentimental grievance. The land system of Ireland, if it was to be accounted a grievance at all, must have been acknowledged to be one of a terribly practical character. Ireland is essentially an agricultural country. It has few manufactures, not many large towns. Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Waterford—these are the only towns that could be called large; below these we come to places that in most other countries would be spoken of as villages or hamlets. The majority of the population of Ireland live on the land and by the land. The condition of the Irish tenantry may be painted effectively in a single touch when it is said that they were tenants-at-will. That fact would of itself be almost enough to account for the poverty and the misery of the agricultural classes in Ireland. But there were other conditions, too, which tended the same way. The land of Ireland was divided among a

comparatively small number of landlords, and the landlords were, as a rule, strangers, the representatives of a title acquired by conquest. Many of them were habitual absentees, who would as soon have thought of living in Ashantee as in Munster or Connaught. An able writer, Mr. James Godkin, in his "Land War in Ireland," endeavours to make the condition of Ireland clear to English readers by asking them to consider what England would be under similar circumstances. "Imagine," he says, "that in consequence of rebellions" (against the Normans) "the land of England had been confiscated three or four times, after desolating wars and famines, so that all the native proprietors were expelled, and the land was parcelled out to French soldiers and adventurers, on condition that the foreign planters should assist in keeping down the 'mere English' by force of arms. Imagine that the English, being crushed by a cruel penal code for a century, were allowed to re-occupy the soil as mere tenants-at-will, under the absolute power of their French landlords. If all this be imagined by English legislators and English writers, they will be better able to understand the Irish land question, and to comprehend the nature of 'Irish difficulties' as well as the justice of feeble, insincere, and baffled statesmen in casting the blame of Irish misery and disorder on the unruly and barbarous nature of Irishmen." In truth, the Irish agricultural population turned out exactly as any other race of human beings would have done under similar conditions. They held the land which was their only means of living at the mercy of the landlord or his agent. They had no interest in being industrious and improving their land. If they improved the patch of soil they worked on, their rent was almost certain to be raised, or they were turned out of the land without receiving a farthing of compensation for their improvements. Of course there were many excellent landlords, humane and kindly men—men, too, who saw the wisdom of being humane and kind. But in the majority of cases the landlords and the agents held firmly by what seemed to them the right of property—the right to get as high a price for a piece of land as it would fetch in open competition. The demand for land was so

great, the need of land was so vital, that men would offer any price for it. Men would offer prices which they must have known they could never pay, which they must have known the land would never enable them to pay. Offering land for hire in Ireland was like offering money on loan to needy spendthrifts; any terms would be snatched at by the desperate borrower to-day, no matter what was to happen to-morrow. When the tenant had got hold of his piece of land, he had no idea of cultivating it to the best of his strength and opportunities. Why should he? The moment his holding began to show a better appearance, that moment he might look to having his rent raised, or to being turned out in favour of some competitor who offered higher terms for occupation. Why should he improve? Whenever he was turned out of the land he would have to leave his improvements for the benefit of the landlord or the new comer. He was, therefore, content to scratch the soil instead of really cultivating it. He extracted all he could from it in his short day. He lived from hand to mouth, from hour to hour. The whole system of feudal tenure of land under a master was new to Ireland. It began with Ireland's conquest, and it was identified in the mind of the Irish peasant with Ireland's degradation. Everything was there that could make oppression bitter. The landlord began to be looked upon at last as the tenant's natural enemy. Ribbon societies were formed for the protection of the tenant. The protection afforded was only too often that of terrorism and assassination. The ribbonism of the south and west of Ireland was as strictly the product of the land system of the country as the trades-union outrages in England were the offspring of the unequal and unjust legislation that gave all the power to the master and lent no protection to the workman. All the while five out of every six English writers and political speakers were discoursing gravely on the incurable idleness and lawlessness of the Celtic race and the Irish peasant. The law gave the Irish tenant no security for the fruit of his labour, and Englishmen wondered that he was not laborious. The law told him that when he had sown he should not be entitled to reap, and Englishmen were angry that he would not persist in



sowing. Imperial legislation showed itself his steadfast enemy, and Englishmen marvelled at his want of respect for the law.

In one province of Ireland, indeed, a better condition of things existed. Over the greater part of Ulster the tenant-right system prevailed. This system was a custom merely, but it had gradually come to acquire something like the force of law. The principle of tenant-right was that a man should be allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of his holding as long as he paid his rent; that he should be entitled, on giving up the land, to compensation for unexhausted improvements, and that he should be at liberty to sell the "good-will" of his farm for what it would fetch in the market. The tenant was free to do what a man who has a long lease of any holding may do; he might sell to any bidder of whom his landlord approved the right to enter on the occupancy of the place. Wherever this tenant-right principle prevailed there was industry, there was prosperity; where it did not prevail was the domain of poverty, idleness, discontent, and crime. The one demand of the Irish agricultural population everywhere was for some form of fixity of tenure. Let it be sought by legalising the Ulster custom everywhere, or by declaring that men should hold their land as long as they paid a fair rent, to be fixed by authorised and impartial valuation, or by some plan of establishing a peasant proprietary—let the demand be made as it would, there was substantially one demand and one only—security of tenure. The demand was neglected or refused by generations of English statesmen, chiefly because no statesman would take the trouble to distinguish between words and things; between shadowy, pedantic theories and clear, substantial facts. "Tenant-right," said Lord Palmerston, amid the cheers of an assembly mainly composed of landlords, "is landlord's wrong." Lord Palmerston forgot that the landlord, like every one else in the commonwealth, holds even his dearest rights of property subject to the condition that his assertion of them is not inconsistent with the general weal. The landlord holds his land as the shipowner holds his ship and the railway company its lines of rail; subject to the right of the State to see

that the duties of possession are properly fulfilled, and that the ownership is not allowed to become a public danger and a nuisance. Land is, from its very nature, from the fact that it cannot be increased in extent, and that the possession by one man is the exclusion of another—land is the form of property over which the State would most naturally be expected to reserve a right of ultimate control. Yet English statesmen for generations complacently asserted the impossibility of any legislative interference with the right of the landlord, as if legislation had not again and again interfered with the right of the factory owner, the owner of mines, the possessor of railway shares, the shop-keeper; the right of the master over his apprentice, the mistress in the hire of her maid-of-all-work. Long years before Lord Palmerston talked so decisively of the landlord's right, a man of far more truly Conservative mind than Lord Palmerston had defined in a few sentences the limits of private or corporate rights. In his speech on Fox's East India measure Burke frankly met this difficulty about individual and corporate rights. He was speaking for the moment especially of chartered corporations; but of course a single owner of property can claim no greater right than a company of property-owners. "It has been said, if you violate this charter, what security has the charter of the bank, in which public credit is so deeply concerned, and even the charter of London, in which the rights of so many subjects are involved? I answer: in the like case they have no security at all; no, no security at all. If the bank should, by every species of mismanagement, fall into a state similar to that of the East India Company, if it should be oppressed with demands it could not answer, engagements which it could not perform, and with bills for which it could not procure payment, no charter should protect such mismanagement from correction, and such public grievances from redress. If the City of London had the means and will of destroying an empire, and of cruelly oppressing and tyrannising over millions of men as good as themselves, the charter of the City of London would prove no sanction to such tyranny and such oppression. Charters are kept when their purposes are maintained; they

are violated when the privilege is supported against its end and its object." If ever there was a creature of law and of authority acting in the place of law, it was the landlordism of Ireland. It was a plantation made by the orders of English sovereigns and governments. It was not a growth of the soil; it was strictly an exotic. It was imposed upon the country and the people. It could not plead in support of any of its alleged rights even that prescriptive title which grows up with the growth of an institution that has held its place during all the ages to which tradition or memory goes back. The landlordism of Ireland was, compared with most European institutions, a thing of the day before yesterday. It was the creation of conquest, the impost of confiscation. It could plead no title whatever to maintain an unlimited right of action in opposition to the welfare of the people on whom it was forced. At least it could claim no such title when once the time had passed away which insisted that the right of conquest superseded all other human rights, that the tenant, like the slave, had no rights which his master was bound to respect, and that the common weal meant simply the interests and the privileges of the ruling class. The moment the title of the Irish land system came to be fairly examined, it was seen to be full of flaws. It was dependent on conditions that had never been fulfilled. It had not even made the landlord class prosperous. It had not even succeeded, as no doubt some of its founders intended that it should succeed, in colonising the island with English and Scotch settlers. When the famine of 1846 and 1847 had tried the whole system with its gaunt, stern hand, legislation had perforce to interfere with the fancied rights of landlordism, and invent a new judicial machinery for taking from the broken-down owner what he could keep no longer with profit to himself or the country. For generations the land tenure system of Ireland had been the subject of parliamentary debate and parliamentary inquiry. The Devon commission had made ample investigation of its principles and its operation. Mr. Sharman Crawford had in vain devoted an honest life to the advocacy of tenant-right. Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, Lord Naas had introduced

measures trying more or less feebly to deal with Irish land tenure. Nothing came of all this. The supposed right of the landlord stopped the way. The one simple demand of the occasion was, as we have shown, security of tenure, and it was an article of faith with English statesmanship until Mr. Gladstone's time that security for the tenant was confiscation for the landlord.

Mr. Gladstone came into power full of genuine reforming energy and without the slightest faith in the economic wisdom of our ancestors. In a speech delivered by him during his electioneering campaign in Lancashire, he had declared that the Irish upas-tree had three great branches: the State Church, the Land Tenure System, and the System of Education, and that he meant to hew them all down if he could. His figure of speech met with a good deal of contemptuous literary criticism; but it expressed a very resolute purpose. On February 15, 1870, Mr. Gladstone introduced his Irish Land Bill into the House of Commons. The measure was one of far greater importance as regarded its principles than it proved to be in its practical operation. In plain words, what it did was to recognise the fact that the whole system of land tenure in Ireland, so far as it was the creature of law, was based upon a wrong principle. Mr. Gladstone's measure overthrew once for all the doctrine of the landlord's absolute and unlimited right. It recognised a certain property or partnership of the tenant in the land which he tilled. Mr. Gladstone took the Ulster tenant-right as he found it, and made it a legal institution. In places where the Ulster practice, or something analogous to it, did not exist, he threw upon the landlord the burden of proof as regarded the right of eviction. The tenant disturbed in the possession of his land could claim compensation for improvements, and the bill reversed the existing assumption of the law by presuming all improvements to be the property of the tenant, and leaving it to the landlord, if he could, to prove the contrary. The bill established a special judicial machinery for carrying out its provisions. It allowed the tribunals thus instituted to take into consideration not merely the strict legal conditions of each case, but also any circumstances that might affect the

claim of the tenant as a matter of equity. Mr. Gladstone's great object was to bring about a state of things by virtue of which a tenant should not be dispossessed of his holding so long as he continued to pay his rent, and should in any case be entitled to full compensation for any substantial improvements which his energy or his capital might have effected. The bill met on the whole with a cordial reception from the Irish members of Parliament, although some of its clauses were regarded with a doubt and disfavour which subsequent events, we believe, showed to be well founded. Mr. Gladstone allowed landlords, under certain conditions, to contract themselves out of the provisions of the bill, and these conditions were so largely availed of in some parts of Ireland, that there were more evictions after the bill had become law than before it had yet been thought of. On this ground the measure was actually opposed by a small number of the popular representatives of Ireland. The general opinion, however, then and since was, that the bill was of inestimable value to Ireland in the mere fact that it completely upset the fundamental principles on which legislation had always previously dealt with Irish land tenure. It recognised a certain ownership on the part of the tenant as well as that of the landlord. The new principle thus introduced might well be denounced as revolutionary by certain startled Irish landlords. It put an end to the reign of the landlord's absolute power; it reduced the landlord to the level of every other proprietor, of every other man in the country who had anything to sell or hire. It recognised the palpable fact that there are certain conditions which make the ownership of land a more responsible possession than the ownership of property which admits of limitless expansion. The existing system of legislation had been founded not merely on injustice but on untruth. It had denied the presence of conditions which were as certain and as palpable as the substance of the land itself. Therefore the new legislation might in one sense have well been called revolutionary. It decided once for all against Lord Palmerston's famous dogma, and declared that tenant-right was not landlord's wrong. That was in itself a revolution.

The bill passed without substantial alteration. The Conservatives as a party did not vote against the second reading. A division was forced on, but only eleven members voted against the motion that the bill be read a second time, and of these only two or three belonged to the Conservative party, and only one, Mr. Henley, was of any mark among Conservatives. The small minority was chiefly made up of Irish members, who thought the bill inefficient and unsatisfactory. Long discussions in committee followed; but the only serious attempt made to interfere with the actual principle of the measure, an attempt embodied in an amendment moved by Mr. Disraeli, was defeated by a majority of more than seventy votes. The bill was read a third time in the Commons on May 30. A debate of three nights took place in the House of Lords on the motion for the second reading, and many nights of discussion were occupied in committee. On August 1, 1870, the bill received the royal assent. The second branch of the upas-tree had been hewn down; but the woodman's axe had yet to be laid to a branch of a tougher fibre, well calculated to turn the edge of even the best weapon, and to jar the strongest arm that wielded it. Mr. Gladstone had dealt with the Church and land; he had yet to deal with university education. He had gone with Irish ideas thus far.

## CHAPTER LIX

### "REFORMATION IN A FLOOD"

ON June 10, 1870, men's minds were suddenly turned away from thought of political controversy, by a melancholy announcement in the morning papers. The Irish Land Bill, the question of national education, the curiously ominous look of affairs in France, where the Emperor had just been obtaining by means of the *plébiscite* "a new guarantee of order and liberty"; the terrible story of the capture and massacre of young English tourists by

Greek brigands in the neighbourhood of Marathon ; these and many other exciting topics were forgotten for the hour, and the thoughts of millions were suddenly drawn away to a country house near the Gad's Hill of Shakespeare, on the road to Rochester, where the 'most popular author of his day was lying dead. On the evening of June 8, Mr. Dickens became suddenly seized with paralysis. He fell into an unconscious state and continued so until his death, the evening after. The news was sent over the country on the 10th, and brought a pang as of personal sorrow into almost every home. Dickens was not of an age to die ; he had scarcely passed his prime. Born early in February 1812, he had not gone far into his fifty-ninth year. In another part of this work an attempt has been made to do justice to Dickens as a novelist ; here it is only necessary to record the historical fact of his death and of the deep impression that it made. No author of our time came near him in popularity ; perhaps no English author ever was so popular during his own life. To an immense number of men and women in these countries, Dickens stood for literature ; to not a few his cheery teaching was sufficient as philosophy and even as religion. Soon after his death, as might have been expected, a certain reaction took place, and for a while it became the fashion to smile quietly at Dickens's teaching and his influence. That mood too will have its day and will pass. It may be safely predicted that Dickens will be found to have made a firm place in English literature, although that place will probably not be so high as his admirers would once have claimed for him. Londoners were familiar with Dickens's personal appearance as well as with his writings, and certain London streets did not seem quite the same when his striking face and energetic movements could be seen there no more. It is likely that Dickens overworked his exuberant vital energy, his superb resources of physical health and animal spirits. In work and play, in writing and in exercising, he was unsparing of his powers. Like the lavish youth with the full purse in "Gil Blas," he appeared to believe that his stock could never be spent. Men who were early companions of his,

and who had not half his vital power, outlived him many years. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, although his own desire was to be laid quietly in Rochester churchyard. It was held that the national cemetery claimed him. We cannot help thinking it a pity the claim was made. All true admirers of Scott must be glad that he rests in his dear and congenial Dryburgh; most of the admirers of Dickens would have been better pleased to think that he lay beneath the green turf of the ancient churchyard, in venerable and storied Rochester, amid the scenes that he loved and taught so many others to love.

Nothing in modern English history is like the rush of the extraordinary years of reforming energy on which the new Administration had now entered. Mr. Gladstone's Government had to grapple with five or six great questions of reform, any one of which might have seemed enough to engage the whole attention of an ordinary Administration. The new Prime Minister had pledged himself to abolish the State Church in Ireland and to reform the Irish Land Tenure system. He had made up his mind to put an end to the purchase of commissions in the army. Recent events and experiences had convinced him that it was necessary to introduce the system of voting by ballot. He accepted for his Government the responsibility of originating a complete scheme of National Education. Meanwhile, there were many questions of the highest importance in foreign policy waiting for solution. The American Government did what every cool and well-informed observer must have known they would do; they pressed for a settlement of the claims arising out of the damage done by the *Alabama* and other Southern cruisers which had been built in English dockyards and had sailed from English ports. In the mid career of the Government the war broke out between France and Prussia. Russia took advantage of the opportunity to insist that the Treaty of Paris must be altered by the cancelling of the clause which "formally and in perpetuity" refused to every Power the right of having a fleet in the Black Sea. Each of these questions was of capital importance; each might have involved the country in war. It required no common energy and strength of character



to keep closely to the work of domestic reform, amid such exciting discussions in foreign policy all the while, and with the war-trumpet ringing for a long time in the ears of England.

Mr. Forster's Education Bill may be said to have been run side by side with the Irish Land Bill. The Government undertook a great and a much-needed work when it set about establishing a national system of elementary education. The manner in which England had neglected the education of her poor children had long been a reproach to her civilisation. She was behind every other great country in the world ; she was behind most countries that in nowise professed to be great. Prussia and nearly all the German countries were centuries in advance of her ; so were some, if not actually all, of the American States. We have already shown in these pages, by what pitiful patchwork of compromises and make-shift expedients England had been trying to put together something like a plan for the instruction of the children of the poor. Private charity was eked out in a parsimonious and miserable manner by a scanty dole from the State ; and as a matter of course, where the direst poverty prevailed, and naturally brought the extremest need for assistance to education, there the wants of the place were least efficiently supplied. For years the statesmanship of England had been kept from any serious attempt to grapple with the evil by the doctrine that popular education ought not to be the business of a Government. The idea prevailed that education conducted by the State would be something un-English ; something which might do very well for Germans and Americans and other such people, but which was entirely unsuited to the manly independence of the true Briton. It therefore came about that more than two-thirds of the children of the country were absolutely without instruction. One of the first great tasks which Mr. Gladstone's Government undertook, was to reform this condition of things, and to provide England for the first time in her history with a system of National Education. On February 17, 1870, Mr. Forster introduced a bill, having for its object to provide for public elementary education in England and

Wales. The basis of the measure was very simple, but also very comprehensive. Mr. Forster proposed to establish a system of School Boards in England and Wales; and to give to each board the power to frame bye-laws compelling the attendance of all children, from five to twelve years of age, within the school district. The Government did not see their way to a system of direct and universal compulsion. They therefore fell back on a compromise, by leaving the power to compel in the hands of the local authorities. Existing schools were, in many instances, to be adopted by the bill, and to receive Government aid, on condition that they possessed a certain amount of efficiency in education, that they submitted themselves to the examination of an undenominational inspector, and that they admitted a conscience clause as part of their regulations. The funds were to be procured, partly by local rates, partly by grants from the Treasury, and partly by the fees paid in the paying schools. There were of course to be free schools provided, where the poverty of the population was such as, in the opinion of the local authorities, to render gratuitous instruction indispensable.

The bill at first was favourably received. But the general harmony of opinion did not last long. The task proved to be one of the most difficult that the Government could have undertaken. The whole body of the English and Welsh Nonconformists soon declared themselves in strong hostility to some of the bill's provisions. Mr. Forster found, when he came to examine into the condition of the machinery of education in England, that there was already a system of schools existing under the charge of religious bodies of various kinds: the State Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, and other authorities. These he proposed to adopt as far as possible into his scheme; to affiliate them, as it were, to the Governmental system of education. But he had to make some concession to the religious principles on which such schools were founded. He could not by any stroke of authority undertake to change them all into secular schools. He therefore proposed to meet the difficulty by adopting regulations compelling every school of this kind which obtained

Government aid or recognition to accept a conscience clause by means of which the religious convictions of parents and children should be scrupulously regarded in the instruction given during the regular school hours. On this point the Nonconformists as a body broke away from the Government. They laid down the broad principle that no State aid whatever should be given to any schools but those which were conducted on strictly secular and undenominational principles. It ought to be superfluous to say that the Nonconformists did not object to the religious instruction of children. It ought not to be supposed for a moment that they attached less importance to religious instruction than any other body of persons. Their principle was that public money, the contribution of citizens of all shades of belief, ought only to be given for such teaching as the common opinion of the country was agreed upon. The contribution of the Jew, they argued, ought not to be exacted in order to teach Christianity; the Protestant ratepayer ought not to be compelled to pay for the instruction of Roman Catholic children in the tenets of their faith; the Irish Catholic in London or Birmingham ought not to be called upon to pay in any way for the teaching of distinctively Protestant doctrine.

Therefore, they said, let us at any cost establish a strictly national and secular system in our public elementary schools; let us teach there what we are all agreed upon; and let us leave the duty of teaching religion to the ministers of religion, and to the parents of the children. About the truths of arithmetic and geography, about spelling and writing, we are all agreed; let our common contributions be given to common instruction, and let each denomination provide in its own way for the religious training of its young people. This way of looking at the question left out of notice one most important element in the controversy: the existence of large bodies of citizens who conscientiously objected to any school teaching which was divorced from religious instruction, and who did not believe that there could be any education in the true sense without the influence of religion accompanying and inspiring it. We shall not here discuss the relative worth of these two

opposing and irreconcilable theories of public education. The fact that they existed, made it well-nigh impossible for the Government to satisfy the demands of the Nonconformists. Mr. Forster could not admit the principle for which they contended. He could not say that it would be a fair and equal plan to offer secular education, and that alone, to all bodies of the community; for he was well aware that there were such bodies who were conscientiously opposed to what was called secular education, and who could not agree to accept it. He therefore acknowledged existing and very palpable facts, and endeavoured to establish a system which should satisfy the consciences of all the denominations. But the Nonconformists would not meet him on this ground. They set up their shibboleth of undenominational education; they made a fetish of their theory of State aid; and they fought Mr. Forster long and ably and bitterly. The Liberal minister was compelled to accept more than once the aid of the Conservative party; for that party as a whole adopted the principle which insisted on religious instruction in every system of national education. It more than once happened, therefore, that Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone found themselves appealing to the help of Conservatives and of Roman Catholics against that dissenting body of Englishmen who were usually the main support of the Liberal party. It happened too, very unfortunately, that at this time Mr. Bright's health had so far given way as to compel him to seek complete rest from parliamentary duties. His presence and his influence with the Nonconformists might perhaps have tended to moderate their course of action, and to reconcile them to the policy of the Government even on the subject of national education; but his voice was silent then, and for long after. The split between the Government and the Nonconformists became something like a complete severance. Many angry and bitter words were spoken in the House of Commons on both sides. On one occasion, there was an almost absolute declaration on the part of Mr. Gladstone and of Mr. Miall, a leading Nonconformist, that they had parted company for ever. The Education Bill was nevertheless a great success. The

School Boards became really valuable and powerful institutions, and the principle of the cumulative vote was tested for the first time in their elections. When School Boards were first established in the great cities, their novelty and the evident importance of the work they had to do, attracted to them some of the men of most commanding intellect and position. The London School Board had as its chairman, for instance, Lord Lawrence, the great Indian statesman, lately a Viceroy, and for one of its leading members Professor Huxley. An important peculiarity of the School Boards, too, was the fact that they admitted women to the privileges of membership; and this admission was largely availed of. Women voted, proposed amendments, sat on committees, and in every way took their part of the duties of citizenship in the business of national education. When the novelty of the system wore off, some of the more eminent men gradually fell out of the work, but the School Boards never failed to maintain a high and useful standard of membership. They began and continued to be strictly representative institutions. From the peer to the working man, from Evangelical Churchman to Catholic; from Non-conformist to Rationalist; from old-fashioned middle-class Paterfamilias to eager young women shrilly representing the rights of her sex, they became a mirror of English public and business life. Most of their work even still remains to be done. The school system of the country needs many improvements and many relaxations, probably, before it can be pronounced to be in fair working order. Its existence has in many parts of England brought thus far not peace but a sword. The struggle between the conscientious belief of one class of persons and the political dogma of another, is still going on. Many attempts were made to induce the Government to go as far as direct compulsory education, and much dissatisfaction was expressed at the refusal of ministers to venture on the adoption of such a principle. It is therefore not unreasonable to say that the national system of education has hardly yet had a fair and full trial. But so far as it has gone, there can be no doubt of the success it has achieved. No man exists who would, if he could, see

England return to the condition of things which prevailed before the days of the Gladstone administration. But it must be owned that the Gladstone administration was weakened and not strengthened by its education scheme. One of the first symptoms of coming danger to Mr. Gladstone's Government was found in the estrangement of the English Nonconformists. They clung to their adopted principle with a genuine Puritan pertinacity. They admitted no respect of persons where that was concerned. Honest, conscientious and narrow, they were ready to sacrifice any party and any minister, rather than tolerate concession or compromise.

The Government were a little unfortunate too as regarded another great reform; that of the organisation of the army. Mr. Cardwell, the War Minister, brought forward a scheme for the reconstruction of the army, by combining under one system of discipline the regular troops, the militia, the volunteers, and the reserve. One most important part of the scheme was, the abolition of the purchase system for officers' commissions, and the substitution of promotion according to merit. Except in certain regiments, and in certain branches of the service outside England itself, the rule was, that an officer obtained his commission by purchase. Promotion was got in the same way. An officer bought a step up in the service. A commission was a vested interest; a personal property. The owner had paid so much for it, and he expected to get so much for it when he thought fit to sell it. The regulation price recognised by law and the Horse Guards was not by any means the actual price of the commission. It became worth much more to the holder, and of course he expected to get its real price, not its regulation, or nominal and imaginary price. The regulation price was to the real price what the cost of the ticket bought at the door of an Italian theatre is to the sum which has to be paid inside for a seat from which to see the play. This anomalous and extraordinary system had grown up with the growth of the English army, until it seemed in the eyes of many an essential condition of the army's existence. It found defenders almost every

Liberals sank within them as they heard the announcement of the triumph. Mr. Disraeli condemned in the strongest terms the sudden exercise of the prerogative of the Crown to help the Ministry out of a difficulty; and many a man of mark and influence on the Liberal benches felt that there was good ground for the strictures of the leader of the Opposition. Mr. Fawcett in particular condemned the act of the Government. He insisted that if it had been done by a Tory minister it would have been passionately denounced by Mr. Gladstone amid the plaudits of the whole Liberal party. Mr. Fawcett was a man who occupied a remarkable position in the House of Commons. In his early manhood he met with an accident which entirely destroyed the sight of his eyes. He made the noble resolve that he would nevertheless follow unflinchingly the career he had previously mapped out for himself, and would not allow the terrible calamity he had suffered to drive him from the active life of the political world. His tastes were for politics and political economy. He published a manual of political economy; he wrote largely on the subject in reviews and magazines; he was elected Professor of the science in his own university, Cambridge. He was in politics as well as in economics a pupil of Mr. Mill; and with the encouragement and support of Mr. Mill he became a candidate for a seat in Parliament. He was a Liberal of the most decided tone; but he was determined to hold himself independent of party. He stood for Southwark against Mr. Layard in 1857, and was defeated; he contested Cambridge and Brighton at subsequent elections, and at last in 1865 he was successful at Brighton. He was not long in the House of Commons before it was acknowledged that his political career was likely to be something of a new force in Parliament. A remarkably powerful reasoner, he was capable notwithstanding his infirmity of making a long speech full of figures and of statistical calculations. His memory was fortunately so quick and powerful as to enable him easily to dispense with all the appliances, which even well-trained speakers commonly have to depend upon when they enter into statistical controversy. In Parliament he held faithfully

to the purpose with which he had entered it, and was a thorough Liberal in principles, but absolutely independent of the expedients and sometimes of the mere discipline of party. If he believed that the Liberal ministers were going wrong, he censured them as freely as though they were his political opponents. On this occasion he felt strongly about the course Mr. Gladstone had taken, and he expressed himself in language of unmeasured condemnation. It seems hard to understand how any independent man could have come to any other conclusion. The exercise of the Royal prerogative was undoubtedly legal. Much time was wasted in testifying to its legality. The question in dispute was whether its sudden introduction in such a manner was a proper act on the part of the Government; whether it was right to cut short by virtue of the Queen's prerogative a debate which had previously been carried on without the slightest intimation that the controversy was to be settled in any other way than that of the ordinary parliamentary procedure. There seems to be only one reasonable answer to this question. The course taken by Mr. Gladstone was unusual, unexpected, unsustained by any precedent; it was a mere surprise; it was not fair to the House of Lords; it was not worthy of the occasion, or the ministry, or the Liberal principles they professed. Great stress was laid upon an opinion which was obtained from Sir Roundell Palmer in justification of the action of the Government. But Sir Roundell Palmer merely gave it as his opinion that the issuing of the warrant cancelling purchase was within the constitutional power of the Crown. On that subject there could be no reasonable doubt. But that was not the question which people were discussing so eagerly. They were asking whether it was fair to begin a measure of reform on the ordinary principles of Parliamentary procedure, and suddenly to bring it to a close by the unexpected intervention of the Royal prerogative. On this question, the only one really at issue, Sir Roundell Palmer's letter was a condemnation, not a justification, of the course taken by the Government. "I should have been glad," Sir Roundell Palmer wrote to Mr. Cardwell, "if it had been generally and clearly understood from the



beginning that, subject to the sense of Parliament being ascertained with reference to the point of compensation, the form of procedure would be that which was eventually adopted, because it is certainly an evil that the adoption of one constitutional mode of procedure rather than another should appear to arise from an adverse vote of the House of Lords."

The introduction of the prerogative in this curious way did much to damage the influence of Mr. Gladstone's Government. Every one in the end came to approve of the principle of promotion in the army by merit, and the abolition of the anomalous system of purchase. But this great reform could at most have been delayed for only a single session by the House of Lords. It would have been carried, as the ballot was carried, the moment it was sent up a second time from the representative chamber. It is not even certain that the House of Lords, if firmly met, would have carried their opposition long enough to delay the mission by a single session. In any case the time lost would not have counted for much; better by far to have waited another session than to have carried the point at once by a stroke of policy which seemed impatient, petulant, and even unfair. It is evident that among the independent men of his own party, Mr. Gladstone suffered discredit by the manner in which he swept the purchase system away, and "bade his will avouch it." Among the many influences already combining to weaken his authority, the impression produced by this stroke of policy was not the least powerful.

The Ballot Bill was not carried without a struggle. It was introduced by Mr. Forster on February 20, 1871, and was a measure embodying some remarkable changes. Its principal object was of course the introduction of the system of secret voting. This Mr. Forster proposed to do by compelling each voter to use only an official voting-paper which he was to obtain at the polling-place and there alone. Entering the polling-place, the voter was to go to the official in charge, and mention his name and his place of residence. The official, having ascertained that he was properly on the register, would hand him a stamped paper

on which to inscribe his vote. The voter was to take the paper into a separate compartment and there privately mark a cross opposite the printed name of the candidate for whom he desired to record his vote. He was then to fold up the paper in such a manner as to prevent the mark from being seen, and in the presence of the official drop it into the urn for containing the votes. By this plan Mr. Forster proposed not only to obtain secrecy but also to prevent personation. The Bill likewise undertook to abolish the old practice of nominating candidates publicly by speeches at the hustings. Instead of a public nomination it was intended that the candidates should be nominated by means of a paper containing the names of a proposer and seconder and eight assentors, all of whom must be registered voters. This paper being handed to the returning officer would constitute a nomination. Thus was abolished one of the most characteristic and time-dishonoured peculiarities of electioneering. Every humorous writer, every satirist with pencil or pen, from Hogarth to Dickens, had made merry with the scenes of the nomination day. No ceremonial could be at once more useless and more mischievous. In England the candidates were proposed and seconded in face of each other on a public platform in some open street or market-place in the presence of a vast tumultuous crowd, three-fourths of whom were generally drunk and all of whom were inflamed by the passion of a furious partisanship. Fortunate indeed was the orator whose speech was anything more than dumb show. The Conservative part of the crowd usually made it a point of honour not to listen to the Liberal candidate or allow him to be heard; the Liberal partisans in the street were equally resolute to drown the eloquence of the Tory candidate. Brass bands and drums not unusually accompanied the efforts of the speakers to make themselves heard. Brickbats, dead cats, and rotten eggs came flying like bewildering meteors around the ears of the rival politicians on the hustings. The crowds generally enlivened the time by a series of faction fights among themselves. Anything more grotesque, more absurd, more outrageous it would be

impossible to imagine. The Bill introduced by Mr. Forster would have deserved the support of all rational beings, if it proposed no greater reform than simply the abolition of this abominable system. But the ballot had long become an indispensable necessity. Bribery, corruption, intimidation, were the monstrous outcome of the system of open voting. Yet for long years no reform had seemed more unlikely than the adoption of the ballot. In Mr. Grote's days there used to be an annual debate on the motion in favour of the ballot, and Mr. Grote generally found himself supported by a very respectable minority, and by some speakers of great influence. Still his proposal was even then regarded by Parliament and the public in general rather as a crotchet than as a practical scheme. In the "Song of the Box" Thomas Moore made easy ridicule of Grote and his ballot.

And oh, when at last even this greatest of Grotes  
Must bend to the power that at every door knocks,  
May he drop in the urn like his own silent votes,  
And the tomb of his rest be a large ballot box.

Lord Palmerston made precisely the same joke years after about Mr. Henry Berkeley and his annual motion for the adoption of the ballot. He expressed a hope that when the inevitable hour came for Mr. Berkeley to quit the scene of his mortal labours, his tomb might be made in the likeness of a ballot-box. Lord Palmerston evidently was not acquainted with Moore's lines about Mr. Grote, and was under the impression that he was making an original joke. In Mr. Berkeley's hands, the ballot debate became less important than it had been with Mr. Grote. On one remarkable occasion indeed, Mr. Berkeley contrived to carry a sort of snap vote against the Government. The division was taken unexpectedly in a very thin house, and 86 voted for the ballot and 80 against it. But nothing came of this, and the whole question seemed at one time in a fair way to be classed with Mr. Spooner's motion for the withdrawal of the Maynooth Grant or Mr. Newdegate's appeal for the inspection of convents. Lord Palmerston used to argue complacently that the franchise

was not a right but a trust; that the trust was exercised on behalf of the community in general, and that the voter was bound to discharge his duty in public so that those for whom he acted should know that he was acting fairly. This way of treating the question held out a temptation to long and futile controversy as to whether the franchise was or was not the right of a free man, and in what we may call the metaphysics of the subject the really practical object of the discussion became lost. Lord Palmerston's description of the franchise did not in the slightest degree affect the argument in favour of the ballot. If the franchise was a trust and only a trust, there was none the less necessity that the trustee should be so protected as to enable him to discharge his trust conscientiously and properly. The objection to the open vote was that in a vast number of instances the voter could not safely vote according to his conscience and his convictions. If he was a tenant he was in terror of his landlord; if he was a workman he was afraid of his employer; if he was a small shopkeeper in a country town he was in dread of offending some wealthy customer; if he was a timid man he shrank from exposing himself to the violence of a mob. In many cases a man giving a conscientious vote would have had to do so with the certainty that he was bringing ruin upon himself and his family. In Ireland the conflicting power of the landlord and of the crowd made the vote a mere sham. A man in many places dared not vote but as the landlord bade him. Sometimes, when he thought to secure his safety by pleasing the landlord, he ran serious risk by offending the crowd who supported the popular candidate. Voters were dragged to the poll like slaves or prisoners by the landlord and his agents. It was something worse than ridiculous to tell the House of Commons and the public that it was necessary such a system should be kept up because it enabled everybody to see that the voter properly discharged his trust. Yet this argument about the trust and the need of publicity was almost the only piece of reasoning which for many years Lord Palmerston thought it worth his while to offer to the House of Commons. Mr. Mill, who

had begun by advocating the ballot, became an opponent of the system, chiefly on the ground that it was unmanly to conceal one's vote. This way of arguing the question only furnished one other illustration of the generous weakness which impaired the effect of much of Mr. Mill's political and social philosophy: the tendency to construct systems based on what Burke called the heroic virtues; the belief that human affairs can be regulated on the assumption that all men can not only become heroic, but that they can be heroic always. It would be a nobler world indeed if in the giving of our votes as in everything else we could all make up our minds to do right and to defy the consequences. It would be a far finer sight for the moralist or the philosopher to see a concourse of Irish tenants going openly to the poll to vote against their landlords, and calmly accepting eviction as a consequence, than to see the same men screened from the penalty of their patriotic conduct by the mechanical protection of the ballot. The small shopkeeper who offended his most influential customer in the cause of what he believed to be right, would be a nobler subject for contemplation than the small shopkeeper enabled to do as he thought right without any risk or loss. But an electoral system constructed on these lofty principles would be sure to turn out exactly as the open voting system proved to be: a source of almost boundless demoralisation. It is curious to note that in one of the very speeches in which he condemned the ballot on this higher ground, Mr. Mill actually quoted with approval that sentence of profound practical philosophy in which Burke declared that "the system which lays its foundations in rare and heroic virtues will be sure to have its superstructure in the basest profligacy and corruption."

A change, however, suddenly took place in English public feeling. The gross and growing profligacy and violence which disgraced every election began to make men feel that something must be done to get rid of such hideous abuses. Mr. Bright had always been an earnest advocate of the ballot system; and partly no doubt under his influence, and partly by the teaching of experience and

observation, Mr. Gladstone became a convert to the same opinion. In 1869 a committee of the House of Commons was appointed on the motion of Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary, to inquire into the manner of conducting parliamentary and municipal elections. Lord Hartington was chairman of the committee. Its report was on the whole decidedly in favour of the principle of secret voting. Public opinion came round in a moment. Not many years had passed since the very words "secret voting" used to be considered enough to stigmatise the ballot, and to make all true men disclaim any approval of it. Now under the impulse of that marvellous breath of reforming energy which was scattering so many ancient traditions the repugnance to the secret vote seemed to have disappeared. We are speaking now of the public out of doors; for a great many members of both Houses of Parliament were still unconverted. Mr. Forster's Bill was stoutly resisted by the Conservatives. It was not merely resisted in the ordinary way; its progress was delayed by that practice of talking against time which has more recently become famous under the name of obstruction. A good many Liberal members liked the ballot in their hearts little better than the Tories did. The Bill contained a wise and just proposal for throwing the legitimate expenses of elections on the public rates. This was rejected in committee by a large majority. A similar proposal, it may be stated, was introduced again and again in more or less differing forms during the progress of the Ballot Bills, and it was invariably rejected. The majority of the House of Commons is composed of rich men; the majority, it is not unfair to say, is composed also of men who are not recommended to their constituencies by great intellect or distinguished public services. There will always therefore be many persons found to object to any change of system which tends to place a poor man and a rich man more nearly on a footing of equality in a candidature for a seat in Parliament. The long delays which interposed between the introduction of Mr. Forster's Bill and its passing through the House of Commons gave the House of Lords a plausible excuse for rejecting it

altogether. The Bill was not read a third time in the Commons until August 8 ; it was not sent up to the Lords until the 10th of that month—a date later than that usually fixed for the close of the session. Lord Shaftesbury moved that the Bill be rejected on the ground that there was no time left for a proper consideration of it, and his motion was carried by ninety-seven votes to forty-eight. The manner in which the measure had been dealt with in the House of Commons made it seem clear to the Lords that there was really a very general feeling of dislike to the ballot among the members of the representative chamber, and emboldened them to think that they would be rendering a grateful service by throwing it out.

The House of Lords was right enough in assuming that many members of the House of Commons, were not particularly anxious for the introduction of the ballot. The proposal of the Government was welcome to the voters in general ; but it was naturally regarded with hostile feelings by many men who felt small assurance that their seats would be safe if the franchise were to be exercised by every one in security and independence. The ballot was introduced, we do not hesitate to say, in defiance of the secret prejudices of the majority of the House of Commons which consented to pass it. Mr. Gladstone was determined to pass it in the interest of the voters, of political independence, and of public morals. He was now as thoroughly convinced as Mr. Bright himself that the ballot in these countries would be the very keystone of political independence. Recent publications have enabled us to know that on one occasion at least Lord Palmerston did all he could privately to encourage the House of Lords to reject an important measure introduced and passed in the Commons by his own Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Gladstone. This fact, which would be incredible if it were not made known upon authority impossible to question, was not likely to furnish an example which Mr. Gladstone would follow. Mr. Gladstone accepted the decision of the Lords as a mere passing delay, and with the beginning of the next session the ballot

came up again. It was presented in the form of a Bill to amend the laws relating to procedure at parliamentary and municipal elections, and it included of course the introduction of the system of secret voting. The Bill passed quickly through the House of Commons. Those who most disliked it began now to see that they must make up their minds to meet their fate. When the Bill went up to the Lords an amendment was introduced into it with the view of making the ballot optional. This preposterous alteration was of course objected to by the Commons, and finally the House of Lords gave it up. There would obviously be no protection whatever for the class of voters whom it was necessary to protect if the ballot were made simply optional. The tenant who exercised his option of voting secretly against his landlord might just as well have voted openly. The landlord would not be slow to assume that the secrecy was adopted for the purpose of giving a vote against him. At the instance of the House of Lords however the ballot was introduced as an experiment, and the Act was passed to continue in force for eight years; that is, until the end of 1880. We may anticipate matters a little by saying that no measure of reform introduced through all that season of splendid reforming energy has given more universal satisfaction or worked with happier effect than the ballot. There is indeed much still to be done to purify the electoral system. The ballot has not extinguished corruption in small boroughs. It is still perfectly possible to carry on the most demoralising system of bribery there. The plan of what we may call payment by results still flourishes in many a small constituency. It is quietly given out that if a certain candidate be elected there will be money flowing through the borough after the election; and every voter who is open to corruption goes to the polling-place determined to vote for this candidate, because he knows that his vote adds to the chances of the borough's coming in for the refreshing golden shower. Probably nothing could put a stop to the corruption in very small boroughs but their utter disfranchisement, or some system which would group several of



them into one constituency. But in all other objects sought by the Ballot Act it has been successful. It has put an end to an enormous amount of corruption, and it may be said to have almost altogether extinguished the illegitimate influence of the landlord, the employer, and the patron. During a debate on woman's suffrage in 1871, Mr. Gladstone stated that if the ballot were once introduced there would be no harm done by allowing women to vote. Nearly ten years have passed since that remarkable declaration, and the proposal to extend the franchise to female householders does not seem to have made much practical progress. But it must be admitted that the adoption of the ballot makes a great difference in the conditions of the controversy. It was one thing to ask that women should have imposed on them the duty of going up to the open poll and recording their votes in public, and quite another thing to ask that they should be allowed to enter a quiet compartment of the polling-place and record an independent vote under the saving shelter of the ballot.

The University Tests Bill was one of the great measures carried successfully into legislation during this season of unparalleled activity. The effect of this Bill was to admit all lay students of whatever faith to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge on equal terms. This settled practically a controversy and removed a grievance which had been attracting keen public interest for at least five-and-thirty years. Gradually the restrictions which Oxford and Cambridge drew around their systems of education had been relaxed. Dissenters had been admitted first to the advantages of education within the sphere of the Universities, and next to the honours which success in the University course was fitted to command. Twice over within a very few years had a measure for the purpose been carried through the Commons only to be rejected by the Lords. In this busy year of 1871, the Liberal Government introduced the Bill again, and this time, after some remonstrances and futile struggle, the Conservative majority in the House of Lords allowed their prejudices to succumb, and affirmed the principle of religious equality in the distribution of the

honours which the two Universities have to award to those who win success as students within the sphere of their teaching. The Government also passed a Trades Union Bill, moderating as has already been shown the legislation which bore harshly on the workmen. They established by Act of Parliament the Local Government Board, a new department of the administration entrusted with the care of the public health, the control of the Poor Law system, and all regulations applying to the business of districts throughout the country. The Government repealed the ridiculous and almost forgotten Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

The popularity of Mr. Gladstone's Government was all the time somewhat impaired by the line of action, and even perhaps by the personal deportment, of some of its members. Mr. Lowe's budgets were not popular; and Mr. Lowe had a taste for sarcasm which it was pleasant no doubt to indulge in at the expense of heavy men, but which was, like other pleasant things, a little dangerous when enjoyed too freely. One of Mr. Lowe's budgets contained a proposition to make up for deficiency of income by a tax on matches. It seems not unlikely that the whole proposition first arose in Mr. Lowe's mind in connection with a pretty play upon words which he offered as its motto. "Ex luce lucellum," he suggested should be a device imprinted on every taxed matchbox. The joke had to be explained; its humour wholly vanishes when it is put into English—"a little profit out of light"; not much drollery in that surely. The country laughed at the joke and not with it. The match trade rose up in arms against the proposal. It was shown that that trade was really a very large one, employing vast numbers of poor people, both in the manufacture and the sale, especially in the east end of London; and it was proved that the imposition recommended by Mr. Lowe would put out the light most effectually. All the little boys and girls of the metropolis whose poor bread, whose miserable lucellum depended on the trade, arose in infantile insurrection against Mr. Lowe. There were vast processions of match-makers and match-sellers to Palace Yard to protest against the tax. The contest was pitiful, painful, ludicrous; no Ministry could endure it long. Mr. Lowe, who had not

the slightest idea when he proposed his tax of being regarded as a worse than Lucifer by the vendors of lucifer matches, was only too glad to withdraw from his unenviable position. It was not pleasant to be regarded as a sort of ogre by thousands of poor little ragged boys and girls. Mr. Lowe had ventured on the proposal chiefly because of the example of the United States, where the whole system and social conditions are so different from ours as to afford no guarantee whatever that a tax which is found enduring by the one community is likely to be found enduring by the other. He withdrew his unlucky proposal along with his ill-omened joke, and set himself to work to repair by other ways and means the ravages which warlike times had made in his financial system. No particular harm was done to anybody but the Government. They were made to seem ridiculous. The miserable match-tax was just the sort of thing to impress the popular mind as something niggling, paltry, and pitiful. Mr. Lowe did not hear the end of it for a long time. The attempt and not the deed confounded him. Another member of the administration, Mr. Ayrton, a man of much ability but still more self-confidence, was constantly bringing himself and his Government into quarrels. He was blessed with a gift of offence. If a thing could be done either civilly or rudely, Mr. Ayrton was pretty sure to do it rudely. He was impatient with dull people, and did not always remember that those unhappy persons not only have their feelings, but sometimes have their votes. He quarrelled with officials; he quarrelled with the newspapers; he seemed to think a civil tongue gave evidence of a feeble intellect. He pushed his way along, trampling on people's prejudices with about as much consideration as a steam-roller shows for the gravel it crushes. Even when Mr. Ayrton was in the right he had a wrong way of showing it.

## CHAPTER LX

THE BLACK SEA CLAUSE: THE "ALABAMA"  
ARBITRATION

MEANWHILE the portentous changes which were taking place on the Continent of Europe had, as was natural, their effect on England and the English Government. The Emperor Napoleon having taken to himself a Liberal Minister, M. Emile Ollivier, one of the famous Five who for years had represented Opposition in the French Legislative Chamber, had sought to get a renewed charter for himself and his dynasty by means of a *plébiscite*. Representing the question at issue as one of revolution or social order, the Emperor obtained a very large majority of Ayes in favour of his policy and his house, seven and a quarter million Ayes against one and half million Noes. But the minority was considerable, and one peculiarity made it specially ominous. There were more than 52,000 "Noes" among the votes of the army and navy. The Mexican expedition and its ghastly failure had much injured the prestige of the Emperor with the two services. The truth could not be concealed that he had been peremptorily ordered out of Mexico by the United States Government and that he had obeyed the command, leaving Maximilian to his fate. Louis Napoleon saw that he must do something to recover his military popularity. The overthrow of Austria by Prussia had roused a strong feeling of jealousy in France. M. Thiers in particular had endeavoured to keep up an angry mood against the Imperial Government. He constantly reproached the Emperor for not interposing in some way to protect Austria and restrict the ambition of Prussia. Louis Napoleon therefore found himself driven to try the gamester's last and desperate throw. He seized the first excuse for forcing a war on Prussia.

It is probable that war would have come in any case. M. Prevost-Paradol had compared France and Prussia to

two express trains started from opposite points along the same line of rails. The collision must come; it was merely a question of time. The comparison was happy. Prussia knew very well that her success over Austria had aroused the jealousy and the fears of France. France began to revive the old talk of the frontier on the Rhine. Bismarck had probably made up his mind that the quarrel would have to be fought out one day. Still it was a fatal mistake of the Emperor Napoleon to force the quarrel on such a pretext as the fact that the Spanish people had invited a distant relation of the King of Prussia to become Sovereign of Spain. Louis Napoleon managed to put himself completely in the wrong. The King of Prussia at once induced his relative to withdraw from the candidature in order not to disturb the susceptibilities of France; and then the French Government pressed for a general pledge that the King of Prussia would never on any future occasion allow of any similar candidature. When it came to this, there was an end to negotiation. It was clear then that the Emperor was resolved to have a quarrel. Count Bismarck must have smiled a grim smile. His enemy had delivered himself into Bismarck's hands.

The Emperor had been for some time in failing health. He had not been paying much attention to the details of his administration. False security and self-conceit had operated among his generals and his War Department to the utter detriment of the army. Nothing was ready. The whole system was falling to pieces. Long after France had declared war, the army that was to go to Berlin was only dragging heavily towards the frontier. The experience of what had happened to Austria might have told any one that the moment Prussia saw her opportunity she would move with the direct swiftness of an eagle's flight. But the French army stuck as if it was in mud. What every one expected came to pass. The Prussians came down on the French like the rush of a torrent. The fortunes of the war were virtually decided in a day. Then the French lost battle after battle. The Emperor dared not return to Paris. The defence—for the Prussians had long since become the invaders—was carried on with regard to the Emperor's

political fortunes rather than to the military necessities of the hour. There were nothing but French defeats until there came at last the crowning disaster of Sedan. The Emperor surrendered his sword, and was a captive in the hands of his enemies. The Second Empire was gone in a moment. Paris proclaimed the Republic; the Empress Eugenie fled to England; the Second Empire was all in the dust; the conqueror at Versailles was hailed as German Emperor.

We need not follow the fortunes of the war. France made many a brave and brilliant attempt to rally; but it was too late. Official neglect and mismanagement had done their work. No courage, no patriotism, could now retrieve the fortunes of the field. Marshal Bazaine, the ill-omened soldier of the Mexican campaign, surrendered at Metz with a vast army; Paris was invested, was besieged; had to give up, or famine would have done the work for her. The conquering enemy had to be spoken with at the gate. France had nothing for it but to accept the terms imposed on her. She lost two provinces and had to pay an enormous fine; and the war was over.

The sympathies of the English people generally were at first almost altogether with Prussia. The policy of the Emperor Napoleon had seemed so gross and outrageous that the public voice here applauded the resistance of Germany to his attempted dictation. But when the Empire fell the feeling suddenly changed. It was the common idea that the Prussians ought to have been content with Sedan and the complete destruction of the Bonapartist Empire and have made generous terms with the Republic. Great popular meetings were held in Trafalgar Square, London, and in various provincial cities, to express sympathy with the hardly-entreated French. The sympathy of the Irish populations had been with France all through. The old bonds of comradeship dating from the Irish Brigade and from long before it had still their hold upon the emotional and impassioned Irish nature. Many persons everywhere thought the Government ought to do something to assist the French Republic. Some were of opinion that the glory of England would

suffer if she did not get into a fight with some Power or other. It came out in the course of the eager diplomatic discussions which were going on that there had been some secret talk at different times of a private engagement between France and Prussia which would have allowed France on certain conditions to annex Belgium. This astounding revelation excited alarm and anger in England. The Government met that possible danger by at once pressing upon France and Prussia a new treaty by which these Powers bound themselves jointly with England to maintain the independence of Belgium and to take up arms against any State invading it. The Government might fairly claim to have thus provided satisfactorily against any menace to the integrity and independence of Belgium, and they prepared against the more general dangers of the hour by asking for a large vote to enable them to strengthen the military defences of the country. But they were seriously embarrassed by the manner in which Russia suddenly proposed to deal with the Treaty of Paris. One article of that Treaty declared that "the Black Sea is neutralised ; its waters and its ports, thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war, either of the Powers possessing its coasts or of any other Power," and the Sultan of Turkey and the Emperor of Russia engaged to establish or maintain no military or maritime arsenals on the shores of that sea. Russia now took advantage of the war between France and Prussia to say that she would not submit to be bound by that article of the Treaty any longer. The Russian statesmen pleaded as a justification of this blunt and sudden proceeding that the Treaty of Paris had been ignored by other Powers and in a variety of ways since the time of its signature, and that Russia could not be expected to endure for ever an article which bore heavily, directly, and specially upon her.

The manner of making the announcement was startling, ominous, and offensive. But there really was not much that any English statesman could do to interfere with Russia's declared intentions. Two of the great Powers

concerned in the Treaty of Paris were occupied too gravely with concerns of their own to have much interest in the neutralisation of the Black Sea. It was not likely that France or Prussia would stop just then from the death-grapple in which they were engaged to join in coercing Russia to keep to the disputed article in the Treaty. Austria of course would not under such circumstances undertake to interfere. It would have been a piece of preposterous quixotry on the part of England to take on herself alone the responsibility of maintaining the sanctity of the Treaty. Besides, it had long been clear to every practical politician that sooner or later, by one process or another, Russia would shake herself free from the obligation imposed on her by the clause which she now challenged. Literally it affected all the Great Powers alike, but in fact it only concerned Russia, and it was devised as a means of restraining her alone. The Black Sea is virtually a Russian lake. At least it may be thus described if we think of military and political questions only; for Turkey's use of the Black Sea could hardly be of vital moment to Europe, and Turkey and Russia divide between them the Euxine shores. However wise and just therefore the desire of the Western Powers to have the war flag of Russia kept out of the waters of the Black Sea, it must have been clear to every statesman, even at the time when the Treaty was made, that should Russia ever be in a position to demand a release from the conditions which her defeat in the Crimea imposed upon her, she would take advantage of the opportunity. It must have been expected that she would insist upon the abrogation of the clause in the Treaty of Paris which shut her navy out of the waters that washed her own southern shores. But the manner of demanding the abrogation of the clause surprised and offended even more than the demand itself. There was something Calmuck in the coarse bluntness of the obvious admission that Russia now insisted on new conditions because she found that there was no possibility of any Western alliance to interfere with her will. If England had gone to war with Russia, she would have gone to war for the maintenance of an article in the Treaty.



of Paris, which no one believed could be long maintained in any case and for which most of the European Powers cared nothing either way. Lord Granville confined himself to remonstrating against the extraordinary assumption that any Power which signed a treaty could legitimately and of its own motion repudiate any part of the treaty at any moment when it thought fit. If Russia cared about argument it must be admitted that Lord Granville's argument was beyond reply. Lord Granville merely affirmed that when several parties have entered into a joint engagement it cannot be open to any one of them to withdraw from it whenever he pleases, without consulting the others. But of course Russia cared nothing about argument or fairness in the matter. She saw that she had an unprecedented chance, a chance perhaps never to occur again, for getting out of her engagement with impunity ; and she seized upon it and held to it.

We do not see how even a Russian, outside the official world, could undertake to justify the action of the Russian Government. On the other hand, we fear that the Russian Emperor might find a good deal in the events then passing in Europe to plead in excuse of his policy. Public law did not seem for the time to be held in very high regard. The transactions between Prussia and France with regard to Belgium were disgraceful to the statesmen who took part in them. They were cynically avowed by Count Bismarck when he found it suited his convenience to betray his late accomplices. A feeble attempt was made on the part of the accomplices to disavow them, or deny them, or escape in some way from the shame of having set them going. Each party fell back upon the policy of the husband and wife meeting by chance at the masked ball, each of whom makes overtures to the unrecognised other, and each of whom on a mutual recognition insists that the overtures were only made with the object of trying the other's virtue. Thus Europe was amused for a few days, and ought no doubt to have been scandalised, by the controversy between France and Prussia as to which was the tempter, which was the tempted, and what was the real motive of the temptation. Then again the King

of Italy took advantage of the withdrawal of the French army of occupation from Rome to announce that in the interest of order and to deliver Rome and the Pope from the tyranny of the Pope's foreign guards he felt compelled to march the Italian troops into the city, take forcible possession of it, and make it the capital of his dominions. We do not propose to discuss or even to touch upon the religious question then at issue between the Vatican and the King of Italy. We are willing to look at all that took place from the point of view of those who desired that Italy should become one united kingdom and should have Rome for her capital. Even from this point of view it seems absolutely impossible to justify the course taken by the King of Italy. It is easy to understand how Italians and other men should say to themselves "now that the thing has been done, we are glad it is done, and is over." But it would baffle the ingenuity of any casuist to find a justification for such a mode of solving a great political question unless on the bold assumption that the stronger has always a right to do anything he thinks proper with the weaker. At all events it is not surprising that when the Emperor of Russia saw such strokes of policy approved of by the Cabinets of Great Powers like England, he should have said to himself that there was no reason why he alone of all other Sovereigns on the European Continent should not be at liberty to lay rude hands on opportunity. There was apparently a general scramble going on; and the Emperor Alexander may not have seen why there should be any law of morality or honour specially binding on him which was not binding on his neighbours. Such of course would not have been the view of a moralist; but the Emperor Alexander was perhaps of the way of thinking of that philosopher who has argued that it is immoral to be in advance of the morality of one's age. Alexander may have thought that in acting as he did he was only acting up to the morality of his contemporaries.

Lord Granville, however, continued to remonstrate. was necessary to find some way of getting the European Powers decently out of the difficulty in which they were

placed. To enforce the Treaty was out of the question ; but it did not look seemly that they should put up quite tamely with the dictatorial resolve of Russia. The ingenious mind of Count Bismarck found a way of putting a fair show on the action of Europe. He suggested that a conference should be held in London to talk the whole matter over. On November 26, 1870, he addressed a circular to Austria, Turkey, Italy, and Russia, requesting them to authorise their representatives to assemble in London at a conference of the Powers which had signed the Treaty of March 30, 1856, in order "to discuss the questions which are raised in connection with the communications in the circular of the Imperial Russian Cabinet." This invitation was stated to have been issued after the English Cabinet had assured Count Bismarck of its assent. Lord Granville politely assumed that the Russian Government had merely announced its wish to have the clause in the Treaty abrogated as a matter for the consideration of the European Powers, and that the conference was to be assembled "without any foregone conclusion as to its results." This graceful little fiction was welcomed by all diplomatists. The conference met with every becoming appearance of a full belief in the minds of all its members that they were about to consider a proposal which they might either accept or reject as their free judgment should determine. The conference assembled on January 17, 1871, and began its labours by an abstract declaration of principle. A special protocol was signed, affirming it to be an essential principle of the law of nations that no State could release itself from the engagements of a treaty unless with the consent of the other contracting Powers. This important declaration, which amounted exactly to the announcement of the fact that there must be at least two parties to a bargain, was solemnly agreed upon, and then the conference felt itself quite free to finish its work on March 13, 1871, by agreeing to a Treaty abrogating the clause for the neutralisation of the Black Sea. There was something a little farcical about the whole transaction. We learn from Madame de Remusat that when the great Napoleon played chess he

liked to move the pieces occasionally in any way that suited his plans, and without any particular regard to the established rules of the game. If it seemed advantageous to him at some particular moment to give to his king the unlimited movement of the queen, he was in the habit of composedly adopting this new principle. Now we can perhaps imagine a few old-fashioned courtiers being a little offended at this arbitrary and one-sided plan of action, and conscious at the same time of their own inability to overrule the will of the great conqueror. What could be a more honourable and prudent way of reconciling principle and interest than to hold a chess conference, pass a resolution that it is one of the essential principles of the game that no player can alter its laws merely to please himself; and then after this saving protest proceed to authorise the Emperor Napoleon to make the particular moves that he happened just then to desire? Something like this was the policy pursued by the conference held in London. It did not tend to raise the credit or add to the popularity of the English Government. We do not know that there was anything better to do; we can only say that the Government deserves commiseration which at an important European crisis can do nothing better.

Other troubles began to press upon Mr. Gladstone's Government. A few weeks after the issue of the Russian circular repudiating the neutralisation clause in the Treaty of Paris, General Grant in opening the Congress of the United States announced that the time had come when the American Government must take some decided steps for the settlement of the *Alabama* claims. This dispute had reached what we may call its second stage. The first was when the English Government declined to admit any responsibility for the losses inflicted on American commerce. The second was arrived at when the more sober judgment of Lord Stanley acknowledged a willingness to submit the question to some manner of arbitration. When matters had gone so far it was natural that attempts should be made at a convention for the settlement of the claims. In one instance a convention, devised

by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, then American Minister in England, had actually been signed by Lord Clarendon, Foreign Secretary, whose death in June 1870 was followed by Lord Granville's removal from the Colonial to the Foreign Office. The Senate of the United States however rejected this convention by a majority of fifty-four to one, and Mr. Reverdy Johnson resigned his office. The doom of the convention was chiefly brought about by the efforts of Mr. Charles Sumner, a leading member of the Senate of the United States. Most readers are probably aware of the fact that treaties concluded on behalf of the American Government have to be referred for confirmation to the United States Senate, and that it is in the power of the Senate either to confirm or to reject them. In the foreign policy of the American Republic the Senate exercises a direct and most important influence. Mr. Sumner was at that time the most eloquent and the most influential member of the Senate. He was a man of remarkable force of character, a somewhat "masterful" temperament, to use an expressive provincial word, a temperament corresponding with his great stature, his stately presence, and his singularly handsome and expressive face. He was one of the leaders of the anti-slavery movement, and the murderous assault made upon him some twelve years before in the old Senate Chamber at Washington by a Southern planter had filled the world then with horror and alarm. Sir George Cornewall Lewis happily described it as the first blow in a Civil War. Mr. Sumner had been for the greater part of his life an enthusiastic admirer of England and English institutions. He had made himself acquainted with England and Englishmen, and was a great favourite in English society. He was a warm friend of Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, the Duke of Argyll, and many other eminent English public men. He was particularly enthusiastic about England because of the manner in which she had emancipated her slaves and the emphatic terms in which English society always expressed its horror of the system of slavery. In his own country Mr. Sumner passed for an Anglo-maniac. When the American Civil War broke out he expected with full confidence to

find the sympathies of England freely given to the side of the North. He was struck with amazement when he found that they were to so great an extent given to the South. But when he saw that the *Alabama* and other Southern cruisers had been built in England, manned in England, and allowed to leave our ports with apparently the applause of three-fourths of the representative men of England, his feelings towards this country underwent a sudden and a most complete change. He now persuaded himself that the sympathies of the English people were actually with slavery, and that England was resolved to lend her best help for the setting up of a slave-owning Republic to the destruction of the American Union.

In this Mr. Sumner was mistaken. Great wrong was thoughtlessly done to the American Union by the acts of statesmen and others in England, but it is not true that there was any general sympathy with slavery or any national treachery to the American Union. The whole question has been already discussed in these pages, and the writer has not hesitated to condemn in the strongest terms much of the policy and many of the utterances of some of the leading statesmen of England. But Mr. Sumner was mistaken in his main conclusion; the conclusion that love of slavery and hatred of the Union dictated the foolish things that were often said, and the unrightful things that were sometimes done. His mind, however, became filled with a fervour of anger against England. The zeal of his cause ate him up. All his love for England turned into hate. He was as little under the influence of sober reason, when he discussed the conduct of England, as Burke was when he declaimed against the French Revolution. During all his career, Mr. Sumner had been a professed lover of peace; had made peace his prevailing principle of action; and yet he now spoke and acted as if he were determined that there must be war between England and the United States. Mr. Sumner denounced the convention made by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, with a force of argument and of passionate eloquence which would have borne down all opposition if the Senate had not already been almost unanimously of one mind with him. It is right to say that the

particular convention agreed on between Lord Clarendon and Mr. Reverdy Johnson does not seem to have been one that the American Senate could reasonably be expected to accept, or that could possibly give satisfaction to the American people. Mr. Reverdy Johnson was a Marylander, and may possibly have had some tinge of Southern sympathies. With a kindly and good-natured purpose to put an end to an international quarrel, he does not seem to have considered the difference between skinning over a wound and healing it. The defect of his convention was that it made the whole question a mere matter of individual claims. It professed to have to deal with a number of personal and private claims of various kinds, pending since a former settlement in 1853—claims made on the one side by British subjects against the American Government, and on the other by American citizens against the English Government; and it proposed to throw in the *Alabama* claims with all the others, and have a convention for the general clearance of the whole account. Now it must be evident to any one, English or American, who considers what the complaints made by the American Government were, that this way of dealing with the question could not possibly satisfy the American people. It is surprising that a statesman like Lord Clarendon could for a moment have persuaded himself that there would be the slightest use in presenting such a convention to the American Senate. That he did so persuade himself and others is only one additional illustration of the curious ignorance of the condition of American political and national feeling which misguided England's policy during the whole of the American war. The claim set up by the United States, on account of the cruise of the *Alabama*, was first of all a national claim. The American Government and people said, "The course you have taken has prolonged the war against us. You have given comfort and strength to our enemies. You have allowed them to use your ports as arsenals and points of departure for their attacks on us; your flag has protected their cruisers, your sailors have manned their vessels and shotted their guns. We claim of you as a nation injured by a nation." To this the convention

signed by Lord Clarendon made answer, "We are willing that the two nations shall go into arbitration as to any individual claims for personal damages which a few Englishmen may have on the one side and a few Americans on the other. We are willing to look into the items of any little bill which Mr. Thomson, of New York, may present, for injuries done to his property, provided that you will do us the favour of perusing in the same spirit any bill which may be presented to you on behalf of Mr. Johnson, of Manchester." This is really a fair statement of the difference between the convention which the United States Senate rejected and that which the American Government afterwards accepted.

The English Government wisely gave way. They consented to send out a Commission to Washington to confer with an American Commission, and to treat the whole question in dispute as national and not merely individual. The Commission was to enter upon all the various subjects of dispute unsettled between England and the United States; the *Alabama* claims, the San Juan Boundary, and the Canadian Fishery Question. The Dominion of Canada was to be represented on the Commission. The English Commissioners were Earl de Grey and Ripon (afterwards created Marquis of Ripon, in return for his services at Washington), Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Mountague Bernard, Professor of International Law at the University of Oxford; and Sir Edward Thornton, English Minister at Washington. Sir John A. Macdonald represented Canada. The American Commissioners were Mr. Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State; General Schenck, afterwards American Minister in England; Mr. J. C. Bancroft Davis, Mr. Justice Nelson, Mr. Justice Williams, and Mr. E. R. Hoar.

The Commissioners held a long series of meetings in Washington, and at length arrived at a basis of arbitration. This was set forth in a memorable document, the Treaty of Washington. The Treaty of Washington acknowledged the international character of the dispute, and it opened with a remarkable admission on the part of the English Government. It announced that "Her Britannic Majesty



authorised her High Commissioners and Plenipotentiaries to express, in a friendly spirit, the regret felt by her Majesty's Government for the escape, under whatever circumstances, of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, and for the depredations committed by those vessels." This was a very unusual acknowledgment to make as the opening of a document intended to establish a tribunal of arbitration for the claims in dispute. It ought not in itself to be considered as anything of a humiliation. In public as in private life, it ought to be honourable rather than otherwise to express regret that we should even unwittingly have done harm to our neighbour, or allowed harm to be done to him; that we have shot our arrow o'er the house and hurt our brother. But when compared with the stand which English ministers had taken not many years before, this was indeed a considerable change of attitude. It is not surprising that many Englishmen chafed at the appearance of submission which it presented. The Treaty then proceeded to lay down three rules, which it was agreed should be accepted by the Arbitrators as applicable to the case. These rules were: "a neutral Government is bound: first, to use due diligence to prevent the fitting out, arming, or equipping, within its jurisdiction, of any vessel which it has reasonable ground to believe is intended to cruise or to carry on war against a Power with which it is at peace, and also to use like diligence to prevent the departure from its jurisdiction of any vessel intended to cruise or carry on war as above, such vessel having been specially adapted, in whole or in part, within such jurisdiction to warlike use. Secondly, not to permit or suffer either belligerent to make use of its ports or waters as the base of naval operations against the other, or for the purpose of the renewal or augmentation of military supplies or arms, or the recruitment of men. Thirdly, to exercise due diligence in its own ports and waters, and as to all persons within its jurisdiction, to prevent any violation of the foregoing obligations and duties."

The British Commissioners followed up the acceptance of these three rules by a saving clause, declaring that the English Government could not assent to them as a "state-

ment of principles of international law which were in force at the time when the claims arose ;" but that, "in order to evince its desire of strengthening the friendly relations between the two countries, and of making satisfactory provision for the future," it agreed that in deciding the questions arising out of the claims these principles should be accepted, "and the high contracting parties agree to observe these rules between themselves in future, and to bring them to the knowledge of other maritime Powers, and to invite them to accede to them." The Treaty then went on to provide for the settlement of the *Alabama* claims by a tribunal of five arbitrators, one to be appointed by the Queen, and the others respectively by the President of the United States, the King of Italy, the President of the Swiss Confederation, and the Emperor of Brazil. This tribunal was to meet in Geneva, and was to decide by a majority all the questions submitted to it. The Treaty further provided for a tribunal to settle what may be called individual claims on either side, and another commission to meet afterwards at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and deal with the Fishery Question, an old outstanding dispute as to the reciprocal rights of British and American subjects to fish on each other's coasts. It referred the question of the northern boundary between the British North American territories and the United States to the arbitration of the German Emperor. It also opened the navigation of the St. Lawrence and other rivers.

Some delay was caused in the meeting of the tribunal of arbitration at Geneva by the sudden presentation on the part of the American Government of what were called the indirect claims. To the surprise of everybody, the American case when presented was found to include claims for vast and indeed almost limitless damages, for indirect losses alleged to be caused by the cruise of the *Alabama* and the other vessels. The loss by the transfer of trade to English vessels, the loss by increased rates of insurance, and all imaginable losses incident to the prolongation of the war, were now made part of the American claims. It was clear that if such a principle were admitted there was no possible reason why the claims should not include every dollar spent

in the whole operations of the war and in supplying any of the war's damages, from the first day when the *Alabama* put to sea. No one could undertake to say as a matter of certainty that the Southern Confederates might not have submitted at once if only the *Alabama* had been seized and detained, and therefore indirect claims might just as well be stretched out at once so as to cover all the subsequent expenses of the war. In truth, the indirect claims were not only absurd, but even monstrous, and the English Government had not for one moment the slightest idea of admitting them as part of the case to be laid before the arbitrators at Geneva. The bare suggestion seemed more like a rude practical joke than a statesmanlike proposition. Even men like Mr. Bright, who had been devoted friends of the North during the war, protested against this insufferable claim. It was at last withdrawn. We now know on the best possible authority that the American Government never meant to press it. Mr. John Russell Young's interesting account of his journey "Around the World with General Grant," gives an account of a conversation he had with the late President of the United States on the subject of the indirect claims. Mr. Young assures his readers that all his reports of statements made by General Grant have been submitted to General Grant's own revision. General Grant told Mr. Young that he was personally opposed to the presentation of the indirect claims, and that his Secretary of State, Mr. Fish, was also opposed to them. "I," said General Grant, "never believed in the presentation of indirect claims against England. I did not think it would do any good. I knew England would not consider them, and that it would complicate our meritorious case by giving her something to complain about." Mr. Fish agreed in this view, but was of opinion that Mr. Sumner had to be considered. Mr. Sumner was the chairman of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs, a formidable man at such a time. He was not cordial to the Treaty, and was displeased because General Grant and Mr. Fish had already overruled one of his suggestions, "that the first condition of peace with England should be the withdrawal of her flag from the North American continent." That suggestion

General Grant rightly described as a declaration of war, and "I wanted peace, not war." Mr. Sumner had laid great stress on indirect claims, and not to offend him, and not to leave an opening for future complaints on the part of "demagogues," it was thought by Mr. Fish that the best way of getting rid of the indirect claims would be to let them go to the Geneva arbitration. General Grant allowed himself to be convinced against his will. "But neither Mr. Fish nor myself expected any good from the presentation. It really did harm to the Treaty by putting our Government and those in England who were our friends in a false position. It was a mistake, but well-intended. It is a mistake ever to say more than you mean, and as we never meant the indirect claims, we should not have presented them, even to please Mr. Sumner." It was indeed a profound mistake. It was a stroke of policy which no statesman should ever have stooped to sanction. The arbitration was on the point of being broken off. The excitement in England was intense. The American Government had at last to withdraw the claims. The Geneva arbitrators of their own motion declared that all such claims were invalid and contrary to international law. The mere fact of their presentation went far to destroy all the credit which the United States would have obtained by the firm maintenance of their just demands and their recognition by the Court of Arbitration.

The decision of the Geneva Tribunal went against England. The court were unanimous in finding England responsible for the acts of the *Alabama*. A majority found her responsible for the acts of the *Florida* and for some of those of the *Shenandoah*, but not responsible for those of other vessels. They awarded a sum of about three millions and a quarter sterling as compensation for all losses and final settlement of all claims including interest. Sir Alexander Cockburn, who attended the sittings of the court as the representative of England, presented a long and eloquent protest against a great part of the finding of the tribunal. While admitting the decision in the case of the *Alabama*, and recommending submission to the general award, Sir Alexander Cockburn made a sort of histori-

vindication, or apologia, of the conduct of the English Government during the Civil War. It was an eloquent, patriotic, and impassioned *plaidoyer*, which seemed oddiy out of place in the somewhat dry and business-like records of the tribunal's transactions. It occupied 250 pages of the *London Gazette*. Many readers admired it; some smiled at it. The great majority of Englishmen did not read it. It was not so much preserved as entombed in the ponderous pages of the official journal.

The German Emperor was left to decide as to the ownership of the small island of San Juan,\* near Vancouver's Island, a question remaining unsettled since the Oregon Treaty, and already explained in this work. The Emperor decided that the American claim to the island was just. San Juan had for years been in a somewhat hazardous condition of joint occupation by England and the United States. It was evacuated by England, in consequence of the award, at the close of November 1873.

The principle of arbitration had not thus far worked in a manner calculated greatly to delight the English people. In each case the award had gone decidedly against them. No doubt it had gone against them because the right of each case was against them; and those who submit to arbitration have no business to complain because the decision is not given in their favour. England had in any case gained much by the policy which submitted the dispute to a peaceful tribunal. She had saved her own people and her opponents as well from the terrible ordeal of a war in which victory would have been only one degree better than defeat. She had avoided all the legacy of reciprocal hate which is the inevitable penalty of war. She had done her part towards the establishment of a great principle for the benefit of all coming generations. Yet it would be impossible to say that the feeling of the English people was one of unmixed satisfaction. The bulk of a population is not made up of moral philosophers; and what most of the English people saw ~~was~~ that England had been compelled in homely phrase to "knuckle down" to America. The policy which accepted the arbitration seems to us to have

been entirely wise, honourable, statesmanlike and just. The fault to be found was with that earlier policy which gave the United States only too fair a ground for asserting their claims. But it is certain that Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues suffered in public esteem by the mere fact of their having accepted the arbitration which went so signally against England. They were somewhat in the position of a Government who have to submit to rigorous and humiliating terms of peace. They may not have been responsible for the war. It may have been no act of theirs which made the acceptance of the harsh terms a cruel necessity. It may not be open to any one to say that they had any practical alternative but to submit to the demands of the occasion. All this may be true. Yet none the less is the Government to be pitied which has to submit to any terms of peace by which its people seem to be humbled. The Conservative party made it for a long time a great point against Mr. Gladstone's Government that he had accepted the Treaty of Washington. They did not always seem to reflect that a leading Conservative, Sir Stafford Northcote, had been made one of the joint commissioners in order that the arrangement might not seem the mere act of a political party. Perhaps in one or two instances the manner in which the Treaty was vindicated may have helped to embitter the sacrifice. Mr. Lowe, for instance, put it as a clear saving of money, pointing out that a war would have cost much more than the expense of paying off the award. This was not the happiest way of commending the transaction to the sympathies of a proud and somewhat unreasoning public. However that may be, it is certain that the effect of the Geneva arbitration was to create a sore and angry feeling among Englishmen in general. The feeling found expression with some; smouldered in sullenness with others. It was unreasonable and unjust; but it was not altogether unnatural; and it had its effect on the popularity of Mr. Gladstone's Government.

The opening of the session of 1872 was made melancholy by the announcement that Lord Mayo, the Viceroy of India, had been killed by a fanatical assassin in a con-

settlement, on one of the Andaman Islands which the Viceroy was inspecting. Lord Mayo had borne himself well in his difficult position, and had won the admiration of men of all parties by his firmness, his energy, his humanity and his justice.

END OF VOL. II





